
EPISTLES
FOR
LADIES.

TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



EPISTLES FOR LADIES.

By the AUTHORS of
THE FEMALE SPECTATOR.

*To Beauty's fierce tyrannic Sway,
All Mankind their Homage pay ;
But soon, alas ! it's Pow'r decays,
A strong, but short-liv'd, Blaze ;
While Wit and Virtue will maintain,
An uncontested, lasting Reign.*

PRIOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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M.DCC.LVI.

EPISTLES

FOR

LANDS

THE FAMILIAR SPECTATOR





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FOR

LADIES.

BOOK I.

EPISTLE I.

LUCIDAMIA to MELANTHE, on her proposing the means of carrying on a secret Correspondence with a lover, she was sent by her parents into the country to avoid. With the story of CLYDAMON and FLAVIA.



HUS banished from all the gay delights of life, and the more solid pleasures of friendship and society, I need not tell you how agreeably I was surprized at receiving a letter from my dear *Melanthe*. — The methods you have taken, not only to discover the place of my retreat, but also to elude the vigilance of my watchful guardians, is a proof that your wit and ingenuity

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are equal to your good-nature and compassion, and have the highest claim to my admiration as well as gratitude. — How shall I ever sufficiently repay your tenderness ! — My distress is lessened by the share you take in it, and every woe sits lighter on me, by your seeming to feel them so heavy ; — yet, generous *Melanthe* ! — I have something farther than all this to thank you for : I have an obligation to you, which perhaps you think not of, nor even imagine I should take as one ; yet it is such as I tremble to reflect what I must have endured, had you acted in a contrary manner. — If, instead of proposing to me the means of continuing a correspondence with *Seraphino*, you had put your stratagem in execution, and accompanied your letter with one from that unhappy youth, how miserable must I have been ! — My heart sinks in me, and a chill horror runs through all my veins at the bare idea : — No, *Melanthe*, I am unhappy enough already, without the dreadful addition of a consciousness of deserving to be so. — When I encouraged the addresses of *Seraphino*, the condescension was authorized by my parents ; and if the graces of his person, and a nearer acquaintance with his many virtues, made me yield up my whole heart to the enchanting influence, I had nothing wherewith to reproach myself ; but now, in this sad alternative, when they who, under heaven, have the sole right to dispose of me, command me to see him no more, how can I, — how dare I, indulge an inclination, which, however innocent in itself, would be rendered criminal by disobedience. — From the authority which separates us there is no appeal. — *Seraphino*, as well as I, ought to be sensible of this truth, and I hope will not suffer his passion to get so far the better of his reason,

as to make him wish a union, which could not but be attended with extreme wretchedness to both of us.—What though the quarrel between our fathers, arose from a meer trifle to the judging world, we see to what fatal lengths it has transported them, that there is so little probability of their ever being reconciled, that every hour seems to encrease their animosity; and it is not our province to look to the *cause*, but the *effects*.—It is enough for us to know their will;—let others examine into the motives of that will; we are not to *enquire*, but to *obey*.—Hard is it, I confess, to bring myself to think with indifference of a person I have been long accustomed to regard, with the most perfect tenderness.—I know not whether the separation of the soul and body, in the agonies of death, can inflict pains more terrible, yet am I well convinced I owe no less a sacrifice to my duty.—I do not pretend that I am *heroine* enough to perform it as I ought, but I assure you I am *christian* enough to use my utmost efforts for that end.—Let *Seraphino* animate and strengthen me by his example; it is the only favour I ask of him, or will ever receive from him.—I beg you will communicate my sentiments to him on this head, and that he may be certain they are my own, you may let him see the testimony under my hand, if you judge proper, or shall find it necessary.—If our mutual misfortune has so deep an effect on him, as you seem to think it has, it is an action truly worthy the generosity of your nature, to alleviate his sorrows; but, alas! this is not to be done by cherishing any vain hopes he may conceive concerning me, or encouraging him to persist in desires which must be fruitless, because unwarrantable.—Rather set before his eyes the madness of prosecuting

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cuting a suit, which, were he to succeed in, would entail certain ruin on himself, as well as the person he pretends to love.—Illustrate your arguments with some of those sad examples that daily observation presents of the miseries that arise from clandestine marriage.—I will furnish you with one which gave me much pain, on account of my intimacy with the unfortunate young lady, who is concealed under the name of *Flavia*.

The story of CLYDAMON and FLAVIA.

“ *CLYDAMON* and *Flavia* were in a
 “ manner bred up together, the near neigh-
 “ bourhood of their parents, and a certain parity
 “ of sentiments, occasioning the greatest inti-
 “ macy between the families. From their most
 “ early years, each discovered a more than ordi-
 “ nary tenderness for the other, insomuch that
 “ they were called husband and wife long before
 “ there was the least thought of their ever being
 “ so. What was spoke in merriment, however
 “ became serious, as the young couple grew
 “ nearer to maturity.—The father of *Flavia*
 “ thought he could not dispose of his daughter
 “ better than to *Clydamon*; and the other was
 “ very well pleased to give his son a wife edu-
 “ cated in the manner *Flavia* had been.—But
 “ while this matter was on the carpet, the mo-
 “ ther of that young beauty unfortunately died,
 “ and that accident put off for a time any far-
 “ ther discourse upon that head.—It would doubt-
 “ less have been resumed as soon as the mourning
 “ was over, if an unforeseen misfortune to the
 “ lovers hopes had not happened.—The father
 “ of *Flavia* had not buried his amorous inclina-
 “ tions

“ tions in the grave of his deceased wife, he fell
“ in love with a widow lady, and was married
“ to her in less than three months after the funeral. The first use she made of the too great
“ ascendant she had gained over her husband, was
“ to break off the intended match between *Flavia*
“ and *Clydamon*, in favour of a son she had
“ by a former husband, who was unhappily
“ captivated by the charms of that young
“ lady.

“ THE father of *Clydamon* was so incensed at
“ his alliance being slighted, that his resentment
“ was outrageous ; and these two old gentlemen
“ from being inseparable friends, became the
“ most implacable enemies.—The lovers were
“ forbid to converse with, or visit each other ;
“ but love, and the inadvertency of youth, got
“ the better of their duty, and they chose rather
“ to hazard all the miseries they might share together, than endure those which separation
“ inflicted:—*Flavia* packed up what valuable
“ trinkets she was mistress of, and quitted her
“ father’s house at midnight : *Clydamon* had provided an equipage, which, with a proper
“ escorte, carried them both to *London*, where,
“ on their arrival, they were married.—I received
“ a visit from her, and gay as she then seemed,
“ I trembled for the consequence of the rash step
“ she had taken, though I must confess I did
“ not apprehend it of that terrible nature it
“ proved.

“ AFTER subsisting some little time on the
“ sale of their jewels, they were driven to
“ extreme necessity.—It was in vain they endeavoured,
“ by the most submissive letters, to

“ move the hearts of their obdurate parents.—
“ In vain that *Clydamon* used his utmost efforts
“ for procuring some post, or employment, by
“ which he might support himself and his be-
“ loved *Flavia*; every attempt he made was
“ unsuccessful, and the distress of this unhappy
“ pair was such, as no human patience could
“ sustain.—I heard they had not food for several
“ days, when *Clydamon*, grown desperate, resol-
“ ved on measures to force that relief which the
“ cruel world refused to his complaints.—He
“ became a robber on the highway, was taken,
“ tried, and condemned to death.—The shock-
“ ing news soon reached his father’s ears, and
“ what paternal affection could not induce him
“ to grant, the fears of disgracing his family,
“ now wrung from him:—He came immedi-
“ ately to town, and by the power of a large
“ sum of money, properly applied, obtained a
“ pardon for his son, on condition he should
“ transport himself to some one or other of our
“ colonies abroad, the choice of which was left
“ to his own option.

“ THIS unfortunate young gentleman, ear-
“ nestly begged permission to throw himself at
“ his father’s feet before his departure, but could
“ neither obtain a grant of that request, nor of
“ any thing, wherewith he might have been
“ enabled to get his bread in the place to which
“ he was going; and he embarked with the
“ unhappy *Flavia*, who, on no terms, would be
“ persuaded to stay behind him, in a condition
“ such as gave him little room to rejoice that
“ his forfeited life had been redeemed.

“ PROVE-

“ PROVIDENCE, however, ordered it so,
“ that they stood in need of no farther human
“ assistance; — the ship they sailed in sprung a
“ leak, and the greatest part of those on board
“ were lost, among the number of whom were
“ this faithful pair, whom no afflictions could
“ change from that inviolable love they had
“ vowed to each other, and whose good quali-
“ ties, if not obscured by disobedience, had cer-
“ tainly merited a better fate.”

SEE, my dear *Melanthe*! the sad effects of marrying without the consent of parents. — By it we forfeit all claim to their protection, and the world's esteem, — become the prey of calamity and scorn, and in that hopeless, helpless situation, are too apt, as in the case of *Clydamon*, to grow dead to every sense, but that of our wretchedness, and run headlong into crimes to which our nature is most averse. — But should we pursue only such courses for our relief, as are most laudable, we cannot expect length of days, (for this is the providential reward of obedience and duty) or that the few we are permitted to enjoy should be crowned with any true prosperity. — O defend me, heaven, from ever being the victim of disobedience! — The last words my father said to me, as he was putting me into the coach, ring still in my ears, and I hope will always dwell upon my mind: — *If you would avoid my everlasting curse, cried he, make no attempts to disappoint my will, nor think of Seraphino more.* — Alas, I could only answer with my tears, but my heart vowed obedience to the severe injunction. — If you truly love me, help to fortify this pious resolution in me. — Write to me as often as opportunity permits; but mention not *Seraphino*, till you can assure me he is resign-

ed to think as I do on this important subject.—
Farewell, and believe that in all circumstances of
life, I am, dear madam,

Yours sincerely,

LUCIDAMIA.



EPISTLE II.

*From the same to her mother, on hearing she was sent
for to London, in order to be compelled to marry
a man she had the utmost aversion for.*

Most dear, and honoured madam,

AS on a thousand occasions I have experi-
enced your indulgence, I impute rather
to your compliance with my father's re-
quest than your own inclination, that I
have been denied the happiness of an answer to any
of those very many letters I have sent since my
confinement in this solitary recess; and am there-
fore emboldened once more to pour out the ful-
ness of my soul before you;—to beseech you to
have compassion on my forlorn condition;—nay,
even to conjure you, by the tender name of mo-
ther, and all the ties of nature and affection,
to vouchsafe me your assistance in this distracting
exigence,—this terrible dilemma, that, which-
soever way I turn, affords nothing but the pros-
pect of eternal ruin.—My aunt has just now
shewn me a letter she received from my father,
wherein he desires her to prepare for our return
to *London*; but, O heaven! to what end!—to
be the wretched bride, the victim of a man I
can

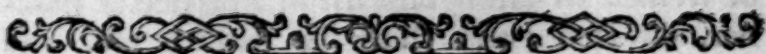
can have no taste for as a husband! — a man, who, were my heart entirely free from all attachment to another, I never could be brought to love! — How can I assume a tenderness it is not in my power to feel! — To be sincere in all my words and actions, was the first precept of my early youth; — I have ever since held it sacred, and I cannot, and am certain you would not wish me to forget it. — But I am now told that reason ought to guide inclination, that the softer passions should give way to the considerations of interest and the world's esteem, and that these plead strongly in favour of *Andrugio*: — Alas how different are my thoughts! — What are his titles to me! — What all the honours his late success has gained! — Meer shadows to attract the distant eye, but afford no real charms upon a near approach. — Can his wealth purchase for me the least moment's peace of mind? — Or outward grandeur compensate for inward discontent? — O no, — where *hearts* are not linked by a secret sympathy, an invisible, undiscernable attraction that binds them to each other, heaven never intended a union of *hands*, nor will vouchsafe a blessing. — Thus, madam, I have heard you say, you argued with yourself, when you refused a coronet for my father: — Your parents indeed did not oppose your inclination, but left you free, to make your choice between *love* and *greatness*; — that, alas! is not my unhappy case; — yet do I not complain, much less presume to expect you should sacrifice your resentment, to comply with the tenderness of my heart. — As I am torn from what I had once your leave to think would form my greatest happiness, I only intreat I may not be forced to what I know will be the most extreme wretchedness that can be inflicted on me.

—*Celia* has given me some hints which I believe she had from my aunt, that it is more out of hatred to *Seraphino*, than good-will to *Andrugio*, that my father has taken this cruel resolution, and meerly to prevent my disposing of myself against his consent, intends to dispose of me so contrary to my own. — Ah, madam! if it be so, I beseech you to assure him, as you safely may, that there is nothing (not even this dreadful marriage) which more shocks my imagination, than being guilty of so rash, so unpardonable a violation of my duty. — I agree to renounce *Seraphino* for ever, — utterly to abjure him, — to see him no more, and, as little as possible to think of him. — I will put it out of my power to listen to any dictates my fond heart might suggest in his favour, by the most sacred obligations that words can form, or incredulity exact from me; but if all this should be thought too weak to atone for my failing in that implicit obedience which is expected from me, reverse at least my sentence; — punish me by any other kind of means provoked authority can invent; — condemn me to pass the whole remainder of my days in lonely solitude; — shut me from all society, or banish me where only lions and tygers dwell. — Fate cannot reach me in any shape so horrid as the embraces of *Andrugio*.

PARDON, I beseech you, madam, the wildness of these expressions, which nothing but the most poignant anguish of the last despair could have forced from me; and be assured, that tho' I have said much more than you may think I ought to have done, I have said little in comparison of what is felt by, madam,

Your unhappy, but obedient daughter,

LUCIDAMIA.



EPISTLE III.

From a lady of quality, to her friend in the country.

Dear SILVIA,

WHILE I envy you the true felicities of a calm retreat, you repine at being deprived, for a few months, of the noisy enjoyments of this tumultuous town. — You long to know what passes among the gay, the trifling world; wish to be told of the foibles you pity, and, in spite of all your good-nature, are starved for want of a little scandal. — Indeed, my dear, I am the most unfit person alive to treat you with this kind of food; however, I will do my best to entertain you, assuring you at the same time, that it shall be at the expence of my own follies, not at that of other people.

You know though I lost my husband before what they call the *honey-moon* of marriage was expired, and became a widow at sixteen, I always declared against entering into a second engagement. I need not tell you my sincerity in this point, since you have been witness of many instances to convince you of it. — For more than four years, I persisted in my resolution; but, you do not see my blushes, while I confess that towards the middle of the fifth, other ideas came into my head. — About that time I happened to meet *Dorimenes*, at lady *Lucia's* assembly; he was just then returned from his travels; the

world allows, he is perfectly accomplished:— he seemed to distinguish me in a particular manner, directed every thing he said to me, and watched my eyes for an approbation:— All the company took notice of his behaviour; they spoke of it wherever they came, and from this first interview gave him to me as a lover.

AFTER this, I could go to no public place without seeing him; whether I went to church, to court, to the park, the ridotto, the opera, or play, I was sure of finding him.— At last he took the liberty of visiting me, declared an infinity of passion for me, and left nothing unsaid or unsworn to convince me of the reality of it.— It was not vanity, but a secret liking, that made me but too willing to give credit to his flatteries:— Yes, *Silvia*, I will own to you that I was weak enough to be pleased with the person and address of *Dorimenes*, and also to let him see I was so.— He proposed marriage, and I had half consented, when a sudden thought came into my head, to make trial how far his affection would extend.— I told him I had but one objection to becoming his in the way he mentioned; which was, that being determined, as I imagined, never to marry again, I had made a deed of gift to a relation, of all I was worth in the world, in case I ever did so, and that the same moment that made me a wife, made me also a beggar; so that, *said I, with a very serious air*, it is out of my power to change my condition, unless to a man who has a sufficient stock of *fortune* and *love* to support a wife of quality, without the least contribution on her part:— The *one* of these, *continued I*, I know you are master of, but dare not flatter myself you have enough of the *other*,

other, to hazard the inconveniences of such a union.

PERFECT as he is in the art of dissimulation, he could not keep the shock this tale gave him from being visible in his countenance:—You would have been diverted to have seen the awkward professions he afterwards made; but I felt a certain tremor at my heart, that convinced me more than I had been before, how much he had got possession of it.—His words, indeed, were passionate as ever, but the accents in which they were spoke, were faint and languid; he vowed his whole desires were centered in my charming person, but his eyes gave the lie to every oath, and while he swore he wished no greater heaven than my presence, discovered an impatience to be gone.—I was now no less desirous to be rid of him, and to break off an engagement I could no longer find any pleasure in.—Some company luckily came, and relieved us both; and, would you believe it, *Silvia*, we have never met since.—He sent me a letter the next day, pretending sudden business into the country; but I know he is still in town, though he carefully avoids all places which threaten him with my appearance.

I SEE, in my mind's eye, as *Hamlet* says, the impatience which friendship and curiosity excite in you for the sequel of this adventure, as it relates to me, for I have already informed you of all I can concerning *Dorimenes*.—I was most terribly mortified for the first four or five days, and half repented of the stratagem which had lost me so agreeable a lover, and by putting his generosity to too severe a test, removed the sweet delusion from my eyes, which, had it continued, would have

have afforded me the same satisfaction the reality could have done; but pride at length came to my assistance, and enabled me to think only with contempt of a man, who while he pretended the most sublime passion that ever was, had only sordid interest in view, made his addresses to my fortune, not my person, and could think with *Hudibras*,

*What's the worth of any thing,
But so much money as 'twill bring?*

ON the recovery of my liberty, I was sadly alarmed at what might be said in regard to this affair.—All my acquaintance had seen the devoirs paid to me by *Dorimenes*; they now saw those devoirs were entirely ceased, and I trembled at the thoughts that my picture might be drawn in a willow garland at all the tea-tables in town, and perhaps exhibited on *Foot's* theatre of mimicry, among his catalogue of *miserables*.—I did not find that an affection of gaiety would of itself be sufficient to defend me from the mischief I so much dreaded; and as I had heard it was a maxim with politicians to seem most open in those things they most endeavoured to conceal, I resolved to put it in practice, and related to every one I came in company with, the whole subject of my last conversation with *Dorimenes*, boasting at the same time of my own happy artifice, which had rid me of his impertinent solicitations.—I had the good fortune to be believed.—My character of insensibility is retrieved; and the raillery falls wholly on *Dorimenes*.

To you alone, dear *Silvia*, my weakness is confessed, and I give you leave to laugh at me as immoderately as you please, provided you put
it

EPIST. iv. *for* LADIES.

85

it in the power of nobody else to do so, and look on the confidence I repose in you as the highest proof of friendship can be given by

Yours affectionately,

SERENA.



EPISTLE IV.

From MARILLA to AMELIA, giving an account of her unhappy passion for MYRTILLO; her being the occasion of his death; the distraction this dreadful accident had involved her in, and the resolution she had taken upon it.

My dear AMELIA,

I CANNOT quit the world for ever, without taking a solemn leave of you, and also making you partaker of a secret, which had I revealed in time, perhaps had prevented my being thus miserable. — If not fated to perdition, your kind advice might have restrained my frenzy. — What have I said! — Wretch that I am! — How dare I, even in thought, prophanely tax eternal providence, or lay the blame of my impurities on heaven! — No, in my intervals of reason I am convinced, and ready with the poet to acknowledge, that

*'Tis our own wisdom moulds our state;
Our faults, or virtues, make our fate.*

O, HOW shall I begin! — With what words shall I confess my folly, my injustice, my perfidiousness,

dioufness, and ingratitude! —How relate the yet more shocking consequence! Yet it is a task which friendship demands from me, and which I have enjoined myself, as the first act of that long penance I have vowed:—Mean, mean atonement for guilt like mine!—Take then the dreadful tale.

You are too well acquainted with the affairs of our family, not to know that I was contracted in my infancy by my parents to *Antonio*; that I was bred up in the notion of being one day his wife; that no other man had ever any access to me on the score of love; and that both being arrived at a proper age, the sacred ceremony only waited for his return from *Wiltshire*, where he went to take possession of an estate lately left him by his uncle;—but, O *Amelia*! you yet are ignorant what happened during that fatal absence.—I was invited by a distant relation of my mother's, to pass some days with her daughters, at a house they had hired for the summer season a few miles out of town;—the request was complied with:—In an ill hour I went, and there commenced my unfortunate acquaintance with *Myrtillo*, who happened to lodge at the next house.—The gardens of the two apartments joined, and each had a back-door, which opened into a curious walk of mingled pines and elms.—As I was a much earlier riser than any of the family I was with, I seldom missed amusing myself every fair morning in this refreshing solitude.—*Myrtillo* observed me from his window, and came thither also.—At first I imagined he was only induced by the same motives as I was, but after a very few interviews, he convinced me that it was rather the pleasure he took in enter-
taining

taining me, than those the place afforded, that had made him quit his chamber.

IN fine, he declared himself my lover, in terms which, the event has sadly demonstrated, were no less sincere than they were passionate and tender.—O heaven! how transporting were those blissful moments!—In spite of the horrors I now feel, a guilty satisfaction rises in my heart at the remembrance, and aggravates my crime.—I had never heard any thing like this from *Antonio*:—From the time he knew what was meant by the name of wife, he had always looked upon me as already such; and all those extacies of passion, those impatiencies, those hopes and fears, those soft anxieties, which uncertainty creates, and are so pleasing in the beginning of love, were unknown to persons who thought themselves secure of each other.—I now found myself addressed in a manner altogether new to me, and by the most charming of his sex; the novelty aided the graces of his form and wit, and hurried me as it were into a forgetfulness of all beside.—The obligations I was under, —the promise made by those who had the sole right to dispose of me, and which my own mouth had a thousand times confirmed, were scarce ever thought on by me, and when they were, made no impression.

THIS destructive intercourse had continued for about fourteen days, when my mother commanded me home, in order to prepare for my marriage, *Antonio* being on his return.—One would imagine this mandate, and the occasion of it, should have roused my sleeping reason, and made me see the madness of indulging an inclination

inclination so impossible to be gratified; yet I was still insensible, and instead of telling *Myrtillo* the circumstance I was in, and breaking off all conversation with him, appointed a place where we might privately meet after I came to *London*.—As his desires were perfectly consistent with honour and virtue, he proposed entreating permission of my father to visit me at home, assuring me that his family and fortune were such, as he flattered himself, would not be disapproved: But this I positively forbade, though without letting him into any part of the reasons I had for doing so; my refusal, I perceived, gave him a great deal of pain, as not being able to comprehend the meaning; but he was obliged to submit, and remain in a suspense, which could not but be extremely uneasy, considering the purity and ardor of his affection for me.

THUS did we live, seeing each other every day, and giving and receiving all the testimonies of love that virtue would permit me to grant, or the respect he had for me permit him to ask.—At last the eve of the day appointed for my marriage with *Antonio* arrived;—then, and not till then, were my eyes open to behold the ridiculous part I had been acting:—I now found I was not only the most unfortunate, but also deserved to be the most despised of women.—I had deceived *Myrtillo*, wronged *Antonio*, and could expect no less than to be exposed by the one, and ill-treated by the other, when once the nuptial rites should put me under his subjection.—I trembled to think what a few hours must make me; for to break off with *Antonio*, seemed a thing so much impossible, that I never so much as thought of it.—I had appointed to meet *Myrtillo*

Myrtillo that evening, at our usual rendezvous; the hour was come, and I had my capuchin on to go; but when I considered the necessity there now was for me to reveal to him the truth of my unhappy situation, shame, and the apprehension of his just reproaches, would not suffer me to do it by word of mouth; I therefore wrote a few lines, which, confused and incoherent as they were, served plainly enough to unravel the whole mystery of my past behaviour.—When I had sent this away, I was a little more at ease, and I confess so stupid, as not to give myself the least concern in what manner I should form my future conduct in relation to this affair, or make any resolution either to avoid *Myrtillo* after I had given my hand to *Antonio*, or continue a correspondence with him.—Indeed I much fear that had I asked myself the question at that time, I should have been weak and wicked enough to have fixed upon the latter; but the honour, and I may say the purity, of *Myrtillo's* affection, saved my virtue any trial of that nature.

I NEVER reflect on the strange indifference, which for some hours possessed me, without the utmost amazement; but soon, alas! this calm was succeeded by a tempest, which ceased not, till it drove me to the last despair,—a despair which must be endless, as the cause is irretrievable.—O *Amelia*! that it were possible for you to conceive it,—that some kind spirit would whisper it in your ears, and save my pen the shock.

IN this inactivity of mind I went to bed, and slept the former part of the night as usual; but towards morning, fell into a slumber, which presented me with the most distracting images.—

I thought

I thought *Myrtillo* came to my bedside, with ghastly looks, and clad in the dismal livery of death; frowning he looked, and in a voice, which still methinks I hear cried, *See, to what your perfidiousness has reduced Myrtillo!* Then shot away, more swift than the lightnings which encompassed him.

SCREAMING I waked; yet still I thought I saw the dreadful vision.—My affrighted heart beat with convulsive throbs, and the cold dead dew hung yet upon my brow, when a servant, (who had been but too officious in forwarding my secret interviews with *Myrtillo*) came into my chamber, and delivered me a letter, which she said he had wrote the night before, and ordered his servant to bring early in the morning.—I need not tell you with what confusion I opened this epistle, though I was far from imagining the fatal purport.—I here inclose you a copy of it,—the very first lines of which will shew you the sad accomplishment of my dream, and the occasion I have for unutterable, ever-during horrors!

THINK for your wretched friend, what all the words in the world would find impossible to describe.—I shrieked,—I tore my hair,—I raved, till nature, quite exhausted, refused to aid my exclamations, and fell into a swoon.—My mother was called,—my father soon followed,—all the family were roused, and the letter lying by me on the pillow, at once discovered my crime, and the cause of my distress.—My father had presence enough of mind to send to *Myrtillo's* lodgings, flattering himself, perhaps, that what he had wrote, might be only the deception
of

of a lover, in hope of breaking off my marriage with *Antonio*; but the messenger returned with intelligence, that the unhappy gentleman had indeed been found dead in his bed that morning.

I WILL not trouble you with a repetition of what was said to me on that score; the condition I was in, abated great part of those reproaches my conduct had so justly merited; and both my parents at length joined in endeavouring to console me, and also to persuade me, that as the mischief was past a remedy, it would be prudence to conceal what part I had in it, and fulfil my engagements with *Antonio*, who possibly might never hear of any thing had passed between me and his unhappy rival—O! how did this proposal add to the agonies I felt;—judge, *Amelia*, for I know you have a soul delicate and tender, could I now think of giving myself up to another, and murder a second time the faithful, the betrayed *Myrtillo*;—forbid it heaven!—forbid it all that is humane.—At such an act, what could I less expect, than to have seen his injured shade rise from his tomb, upbraid my base ingratitude, and snatch me from the altar.—No, I was struck with too deep a sense of the injustice I had been guilty of, to regard aught but the means of expiating my crime, and from the instant I was capable of thinking of any thing, resolved to fly all converse with the world, and think how I might put it out of my power, ever to be tempted by its illusive pleasures, and seek out

*Some solitary cloister's safe retreat,
And there with holy virgins live immur'd;*
Coarse

*Coarse my attire, and short my hours of rest,
Broke by the melancholly midnight bell:
Where fasting, tears, and penitence, and prayer,
May do Myrtillo justice every hour.*

THE words are borrowed, but so exactly conformable to my own sentiments, that I could not forbear making use of them.—Look not on all this as the effects of a momentary passion,—a despair which will soon wear off, and give place to other ideas.—No, it is the result of serious, deliberate thought.—Alas, I had once too little, but have now enough to make me know, that as I have deprived the world of one of its chief ornaments, the least I can do is, to devote the whole remainder of my wretched days to lamentations for his fate.

I HAVE at last prevailed on my parents to consent to my departure.—*Antonio*, who by some accident is acquainted with the fatal story, no longer urges the performance of their promise; and to-morrow I take an everlasting leave of all that once was dear to me.—Adieu, my ever-valued friend.—Think sometimes with compassion on the sufferings of

The lost

MARILLA.



EPISTLE



EPISTLE V.

[*Enclosed in the former.*]

*From MYRTILLO to MARILLA, after he had
swallowed poison.*

Madam,

DESPAIR of life makes me have recourse to death; your letter gave a mortal stab, but tho' *sure*, the effects might have been *slow*, and in the lingering torments of the wound who knows but I might have been driven to more deeds than one, unpardonable either by heaven or you;—to prevent which, I have this moment swallowed a dose, which in a few hours will free you from all apprehensions of any reproaches from me, and the happy *Antonio* from the pain of thinking there was a man in the world who once had reason to flatter himself with your affection.

BUT O, permit me, once to tell you, it was doubly cruel in you to render me *unjust* as well as *miserable*.—Could I have imagined the blessing I wished to obtain was the right of another, not all your stock of charms, nor my excess of passion, should have compelled me to pursue the guilty aim.—It is true, I adored you at first sight, but while my love was in its infancy, time and absence might have assisted reason in subduing it.—O, wherefore did you strengthen the fond flame by fallacious hopes!—Why nourish
it

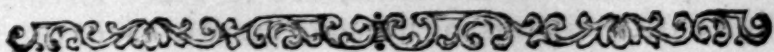
it by fatal kindness, 'till it became too powerful for controul!—Alas! you knew little of the heart you had made so much devoted to you, if you foresaw not the consequence of such a deception.

BUT I have done.—Resentment ill becomes my present state, and I forgive, nay bless the hand that sends me to my grave:—when I am dust, may you live long and happy.—My long last sleep already steals upon me,—my eyelids sink beneath the weight,—my pulse beats languid, and every earthly object lessens, and loses of its former value.—Forgive me, heaven, that thus, uncalled, I venture to appear before thy great tribunal;—for, O, I come.—To repent of my rashness would be now too late:—It was rash to provoke the vengeance of heaven by an act which infinite mercy can scarcely pardon. Had I submitted to his providence, my submission had been virtue, and virtue must be rewarded. But thus to oppose my will to his, by a base and infamous self-murder, is such a cowardly desertion of religious honour, that I tremble to think how it must end. My passions were impetuous;—my reason now returns, but it returns to aggravate my guilt, and render death the *king of terrors*. I can no more.—Farewell, vain world, and too-much loved *Marilla*, farewell for ever,

The dying

MYRTILLO.

EPISTLE



EPISTLE VI.

*From BELLIZA to MIRA, acquainting her with
the occasion of her quarrel with BELINDA.*

Madam,



IT is only obedience to your commands could have made me intrude on moments which I know are always employed on the most sublime and beneficial subjects, with any thing so trifling as the little pique *Belinda* has taken against me, much less to enter into a detail of the follies (to give her conduct no worse a name) of a person for whom I once professed a friendship, and whose weakness I still heartily commiserate; but as she has led the way by first mentioning the affair, and you desire an explanation, I stand excused from any imputation of *malice* on the one side, or *impertinence* on the other.—I wonder indeed, since *libertines* of our sex, as well as of the other, for the most part take a pride in boasting themselves such, she did not acquaint you with the particulars herself, and spare my pen the unpleasing task.—That she has not done so, however, gives me room to hope she is not quite abandoned, and that true piety is still capable of striking her with so much awe, that she dreads the frowns of *Mira*, even at the distance of an hundred miles.

You know, madam, she was always fond of the pleasures of the town, not so much for the sake of themselves, as because she saw them pursued with so much eagerness by others.---A bigot to the mode, whatever it was, she never took the pains to consider whether it reflected honour or dishonour on the followers ;---so passionate an admirer of the court, that the customs she saw practised there, have ever been the constant rule for all her actions.---I have often watched the opportunity of finding her in a serious moment, to remind her that the highest titles were not always accompanied by the best sense, and represented to her in the strongest terms I am mistress of, the ridiculousness of apeing the errors of those we are not at liberty to censure.—She seemed to take all I said in good part, but it seems thought me so little in earnest, that she sent a card inviting me to make one at an assembly she has lately established for gaming every Sunday in the afternoon.

I AM far from being so good as I should be ; the gaieties of life have, perhaps, too many charms for me, yet I can never hear of this open defiance of heaven, this flying in the face of all religion and decency, without being extremely shocked, by whomsoever it is practised.—Were there no written law, there is certainly one imprinted in the heart of every rational creature, which tells us, if we will listen to its dictates, that we are dependant on a Superior Being, who creates us all the good things we enjoy, and therefore has the highest claim to our adoration ; how then can we be so ungrateful as to think one day in seven too much to devote to subjects of a more solemn nature, to his praise, and the improvement

ment of our own hearts? — I could not forbear expressing my sentiments to *Belinda* on this head the first time I saw her, which happened to be the same day I had received her message. — *Florimel* was present, and, as she had been just then endeavouring to prevail on that lady to be one of her party, what I said was less to be forgiven. — She affected however to turn it into ridicule; scoffed at my *primitive* air, as she was pleased to call it, and told me I was turned *methodist*.

REALLY, madam, *answered I*, I know nothing of the principles of those people, but if the appellation given to them, implies no more than a regularity of behaviour and manners, I see no reason why it should be a term of reproach, and on the contrary should be proud of being a *methodist*.

O, then, *cried she*, your ambition may be easily gratified; — you have no more to do than to put on a stuff gown, — tye your hair up tight in the nape of your neck, — travel two or three times a week to *Moorfields*, and chaunt out spiritual hymns, instead of opera airs.

I LET her have her laugh out without interruption, and then told her seriously, that I wished the conduct of some people might not bring them in time to a lodging at a certain dwelling in *Moorfields*; which, when once in, they would not easily get out of.

AFFRONTED at this, and unable to conceal her spite, — nay, madam, *said she*, looking contemptuously upon me, it is my turn to be grave now,

and I am authorized, by your own example, to tell you, that I know nobody more fit to be an inhabitant of the place you mention, than one who gives her advice unasked, and pretends to reprimand a person, who perhaps understands much better than herself what becomes her rank, and character in the world.

I THEN told her that I was sorry to find she had so little discernment as to mistake the effect of my good will for an affront; but since I perceived she was among the number of the incorrigibles, I should hereafter desist from any remonstrances.—I shall take care to put it out of your power to break your word, *cried she*, for I will never speak to you again; *then turning to Florimel*, my dear you will pardon me, *added she*, but I cannot stay where she is. So whisked out of the room like a whirlwind.

THIS, madam, is the substance of the last conversation we are likely ever to have together; for I am informed she makes terrible complaints of my behaviour towards her;—rails against me wherever she comes, and, in fine, carries her resentment as far as it is possible between two females; were we of the other sex, I do not doubt but our quarrel must have been decided before now by weapons more fatal than the tongue.—Tho' for my own part, how little pacific soever I might have proved if I had been a *man*, as nature has made me a *woman*, I too much commiserate her failings, to be very angry at this ill return of the good office intended to her; but must own I am not at all sorry that the accident has broke off any intimacy with one, whose conduct I am afraid will, in a short

short time, rob her of all the valuable part of her acquaintance.

WHAT censures may be past upon me for interfering in a matter, in which it may be judged I had no immediate concern, will give me little pain, as I flatter myself the motive I had to it, will render me excusable in the opinion of the excellent *Mira*, who, tho' mistress of an uncommon sweetness and benignity of nature, can never be complaisant enough to behold, with indifference, any affront offered to religion or decency.

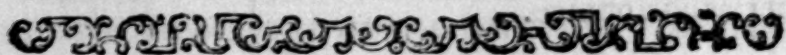
So much of my paper is taken up with this unhappy angry woman, that I have scarce room to congratulate your safe arrival at that delicious retreat, which I could almost wish had fewer charms, since I fear it will detain you longer than is for the advantage of your friends in *London* : — may you, however, tho' I am nearly interested in your return, enjoy all the pleasures it is capable of affording, without the least interruption from ill health, or ill accidents, 'till compassion for the want we have of you, not weariness of the place, restore you to us. — I am, with the utmost sincerity and respect,

Madam,

Your very affectionate friend,

And devoted humble servant,

BELLIZA.



EPISTLE VII.

From ALTHEA to MIRA, excusing herself for not having wrote to her in some time, by giving her an account of the adventure that had prevented her.

My dear friend,

 A M afraid my having so long delayed acknowledging the favour of your last, has made you by this time look on me as unworthy of calling you so ; but I am very sensible you are not of the number of those who judge altogether by appearances, and flatter myself with regaining your good opinion, when I shall acquaint you with the cause of this seeming negligence.

You may remember a letter of mine, sometime ago, acquainting you that being reputed very rich, and known to be free from the incumbrance of children, had laid me under the persecution of no less than three lovers at once ; — two of them I dispatched pretty easily, but could no more get rid of the other, than of my shadow at noon-tide. — He had told me he had a large estate in possession, but as I had no inclination to be jointured out of it, never gave myself any trouble to enquire into the truth of what he said. — Finding self-interest was not my darling passion, he began to attack me on what is called the weak side, and endeavoured to charm me by dint of meer love ; — to enjoy a moment's peace
out

out of my presence, was among the things that are impossible in nature :—I was no less than an angel, a goddess ; a civil look, or what he interpreted as such, raised him to the highest heaven, and a frown endangered his plunging himself into another place.—Never was such an *Oroondates*, in all but his patience ;—in that indeed he was extremely wanting ; for the hero in the romance thought a kiss of his mistress's hand a sufficient recompence for seven years service ; this, doubtless, imagined he should carry my whole person in seven weeks.

In fine, he would take no denial,—nothing I could say checked his hopes :—in vain I forbade him my house ;—he did not only follow me to all public places, but found means to get himself introduced to most of my acquaintance ; so that unless I could have resolved to seclude myself from all diversion, all conversation, I could not totally avoid him.—This perseverance, this assiduity, might, for aught I know, in time have persuaded me he really had found something in me worthy of a sincere attachment, if a lucky accident had not prevented the deception he so well carried on from taking effect ; and I might have thought as *Hudibras* says,

*His passion true, and would survive
New worlds and natures to outlive ;
And like to heralds moons remain
All crescent, without change or wane.*

BUT if I had any vanity rising in me on this score, you will see how it was mortified.—Lady *Fanny* had made a party for country-dancing at her

her house ; I was desired to make one.—*Clerimont* (for so my pretended enamorado was called) was also either invited, or intruded himself, I know not which ; but I was no sooner in the room than he came in :—after having made his compliments to her ladyship, and some others in the company, whom he knew, he approached, and saluting me with an air very different from that with which he had accosted the others, entreated I would be his partner ; but as I was aware of his intention, from the moment I saw him enter, I had already engaged myself to a gentleman who I was very certain had no design upon me.—He seemed much chagrined, but that was not a place for him to teize me with any complaints, in impertinent accusations of cruelty.

MANY dances had not been led up before the heat of the exercise, joined to that of the season, had the usual effects.—*Clerimont*, in plucking out his handkerchief, dropt a letter, which fell just at my feet :—though every thing relating to him was a matter of perfect indifference to me, curiosity put it into my head to take it up, which I did, without, I believe, any of the company observing it ;—but how I was surprized, you may easily imagine, when I shall tell you, examining it after I came home, I found it a letter from a woman who subscribed herself his wife ; and indeed the artless and tender expressions it contained, left me no room to doubt her being so.—So flagrant a piece of villainy, in a man of the family and fortune he pretended to be, extremely shocked me, and I could no way fathom either the motives of his addressing me, or the end he proposed to himself, had I been so weak

as to listen to his suit. — I resolved, however, to penetrate into this mystery, if there were a possibility, and accordingly sent for him the next morning.

SUCH a message, after the treatment I had always given him, would certainly have greatly astonished him, but I thought there appeared more of guilt and shame, than either pleasure or surprize in his countenance when he approached me. — He was beginning, notwithstanding, to assume some shew of the latter, but did it in so awkward a manner, that I then presently imagined he had missed the letter, and had some apprehensions of the truth. — I was really in some pain for him, and to put an end to his dissimulation, let him know, in a few words, the discovery I had made, without mingling the least reproach with what I said. — This it was which perhaps gave him the confidence to think of continuing to impose on me, and he replied, with all the assurance of innocence, “ Alas ! madam, this “ letter belongs to a friend of mine, whose marriage, for some reasons being a secret, I consented all the letters, from his wife, should be “ directed to me.” — This turn, he had the vanity to imagine, as he afterwards confessed, would have passed upon me ; but unluckily there was one passage in the letter, which shewed to a demonstration, that he was the individual man to whom it was *meant*, as well as *directed*. — He had for several days past had the fore-finger of his right-hand tied up, on account of a *whitloe* ; — this very *whitloe* was mentioned by his wife ; you will see on what account, by the copy of her letter, which I here inclose. — On my confronting him with this proof, as it stood in the text, he

grew all confusion : and after I had expatiated, in what I thought a proper manner, on the baseness of his proceeding, he fell at my feet, confessed all I had said was just, but conjured me not to expose him, as what he had done had been enforced by the most melancholy necessity.

I THEN told him, that there was a possibility for him to prevail on me to grant his request ; but it could only be done by his sincerely laying open the whole affair, and convincing me there were indeed some other inducements, besides a natural propensity to wickedness, that had led him into a design so infamous in itself, and so highly criminal in the eyes of God and man. — On which, with an unfeigned readiness, he confessed he had endeavoured to deceive me in almost every thing he had pretended ; — that he was indeed of the family he said, but was a younger brother of a younger branch of it ; — that the small fortune bequeathed him, by his father, was far from being sufficient to support himself in the fashion he had been bred, much less a wife ; yet in spite of all these considerations, he had married a young creature, the daughter of a country clergyman, whom he loved to the greatest excess ; — that she already had brought him one child, and was now pregnant with another, and that it was merely the apprehensions of what she might be reduced to, (the greatest part of his little fortune being exhausted) which alone had put him upon this desperate method of relief, having in vain tried all others.

I ASKED him if she were privy to his purpose, and he answering in the negative, I desired to know, in case he had succeeded, by what magic art

art he could expect to conceal the crime he had been guilty of from either of us?—As to that, *said he*, it might have been easy enough;—my wife knows nothing of the town, has never been in it, and I would have taken care to have kept her always out of it;—an employment I had obtained here, was to be the pretence when I left her; and a jaunt into the country for my health, an excuse when I left you;—the greatest difficulty, *continued he*, would have been where to find balm to heal those stings of my own conscience, which I am sensible must have been severe and sharp, by what I feel in this detection of my intended guilt, even without the perpetration.

HE accompanied every article of this confession with such bitter sighs, and gave so many tokens of a sincere penitence, that I was touched with a great deal of compassion.—I assured him that I was much better pleased with him for designing rather to make me his convenience, than abandon, for my sake, one who had the only just title to his heart;—that I not only forgave the ill he intended against me, but would also prevent his falling into any future temptations from his necessities, provided he approved the means I offered.—He seemed quite ravished at the bare imagination, and said he would gladly do any thing he was capable of.—I then told him, there was a genteel employment vacant in my brother's office, which I did not doubt being able to procure for him; adding, that as he had told me his misfortunes, and I knew money would be required, I would advance the sum, and take his bond for quarterly payments out of the profits of his post.

It would be needless to trouble you with any repetitions of the acknowledgments he made me ; you will easily suppose them to be suitable to the occasion.—I ordered him to come to me in the afternoon, being resolved to go instantly about the performance of my promise.—Accordingly I dined that day with my brother, and obtained a grant of the post for the person I recommended.—I made *Clerimont* write that same night for his wife to come to town, and in two days I had the pleasure of seeing her ;—she is very beautiful, but there is a native sweetness and simplicity in all her air and behaviour, which renders her more lovely than the finest features in the world could do without it.—Her mind seems conformable to her person, and my judgment is very much deceived, if she is not worthy of a man incapable of the treachery her husband was about to practise ;—but of that she is entirely ignorant, and, perfectly contented with her lot, bends her whole thoughts on pleasing him :—He, doubtless, loves her no less than he assured me he did ; and, I hope, as they are now in a condition to live easy in the world, they will always be amiable to each other.—For my part, it gives me an inexpressible satisfaction, to think it has been in my power, to make a virtuous young woman happy, and of recovering a man of some merit, back to honour, when he was attempting to be a villain.

Thus, my dear *Mira*, while I have seemed to labour for the good of others, I have been procuring a real one for myself ; and sure if those whom heaven has so lavishly endued with the means of being serviceable in their generations, could be sensible of that refined pleasure which
results

results from conferring benefits, there would be no such thing as misery in the world ;—all discontent,—all envy,—all murmurings at the unequal distribution of fortune, would cease ; compassion on the one side, and a grateful sensation on the other, would establish a perpetual harmony between the *great* and the *inferior* world. — To me it is therefore strange, that so many of the *former* are indolent in what would certainly be of infinitely the most advantage to themselves ; as the admirable *Cowley* justly expresses it :

*Riches alone are of uncertain date,
And on short life long cannot wait ;
The virtuous make of them the best,
And put them out to fame for interest :
With a frail good they wisely buy
The solid purchase of eternity.*

To avow those sentiments among some of my acquaintance, would infallibly draw on me the censure of a lunatic, or enthusiast ; but I know to whom I am writing, and that it is as needless to make any apology for what I have said on this score, as it would be to entreat you to keep the enclosed letter, and the narration which depends upon it, an inviolable secret, or to assure you that I never can be other, than

Your faithful humble servant,

ALTHEA.



EPISTLE



EPISTLE VIII.

[*Enclosed in the foregoing.*]

From AMANDA in the country, to her husband in town, reproaching him with the fright his last letter had put her into, and acquainting him with the method she took for consoling herself in his absence.

My dear CLERIMONT,

HERE shall I find words to express the agitation I was in, on opening the last letter you sent. — Knowing, as you do, how much a coward I am in every thing where you are concerned, you could not but suppose I should be terribly alarmed at seeing, under your signet, a hand-writing so different from yours. — How could you then be so regardless of my tender heart, or the condition I am in, as not to order your *Ammanuensis* to tell me at once the cause, instead of beginning with those ambiguous words, *I am obliged to employ another hand to write to you.* — Good God ! what dreadful interpretations did I put upon them ; — all that was shocking to imagination came at once into my head : wounded, — sick, — dying perhaps, cried I, and had not courage to proceed, but invoked my better angel to explain what it was so easy for me to have told myself. — At last I ventured, tho' trembling with suspense and terror, to cast my eyes a second time upon the paper, and (thanks to heaven) immediately found that all these horrible apprehensions had been occasioned only by a *whitloe* on your fore-finger.

I DOUBT

I DOUBT not but you will laugh at this new proof, added to the thousand others I have given you, of my simplicity, but that you may not have too contemptible an opinion of me, I must now acquaint you, that though I have nothing of the *hero* in me, I am grown a piece of a philosopher since you left me; and as the *chymists* pretend to extract gold out of the basest metal, I have learned the art of bringing *pleasure* out of *pain*, and converting the worst of *ills* into a *good*. — As thus, my dear, (for I cannot find in my heart to keep you in a moment's suspense) I never give myself leave to think how unfortunate I am in your absence, but how happy I shall be in your return. — I recollect every little event has happened since your going, and range them in order in my memory, to entertain you with, when you come home, and please myself with the expectation of hearing from you many and more agreeable narratives of those occurrences, which the great world you are at present engaged in, cannot fail of presenting you with in abundance.

THIS, dearest *Clerimont*, is the manner in which I anticipate, in *idea*, the blessing heaven will, I hope, permit me soon to enjoy in *reality*: And this is the only method I could take to enable me to obey that strict injunction you laid upon me, of not afflicting myself at our enforced separation. — I do assure you, it has had so good an effect upon me, that I have lost nothing of my complexion, nor that vivacity you used to say you thought so well became me; and if you do not stay (which God forbid) till my shape is too much extended, I fancy you will find me much the same you left me; but whatever my *form* may appear, there needs no asseverations to convince

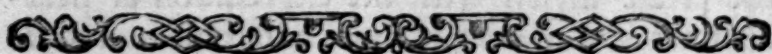
convince you my *heart* is incapable of changing.
—I am resolved to flatter myself with being no less secure of yours, and that all the beauties you may happen to be acquainted with, will have no charms for you, in prejudice of that affection, which law has made my due, and which makes all the happiness, and is the sole ambition of,

My dear soul,

Your ever-faithful wife,

AMANDA.

P. S. I saw our little boy yesterday, he is pure well, and has cut two teeth.—Heaven prosper your undertakings, and send you soon to us again.



EPISTLE IX.

ERMINIA to lady BETTY * * *, giving her an account of the brutish treatment she had received from COMUS; and the providential escape she had from his intended violence, at the house of a person of quality.

I was not without good reason you warned me against entering into any intimacy with the countess of * * * *; but dear lady Betty, that was not enough;—the hints you gave me were too modest to enable me to form any right judgment of that wicked woman,—(so I shall always call her, while she continues to disgrace that dignity to which her marriage has raised her.)—You should have

have taken the privilege of your rank, and the friendship with which you honour me, and insisted on my never conversing with her;—never visiting her on any consideration;—you might have assured yourself, that the respect and love I owe to you, would have prevented me from being ensnared by the dangerous civilities she treated me with.—But why do I go about to excuse my own inadvertency, by laying the blame on your want of freedom in this point.—I had seen too much of her behaviour with *Comus*, when the most public, nay, the most sacred places could not restrain her from answering his lewd raillery loud enough to be heard by the whole company, in a manner not only scandalous to her sex, but even shocking to those of the other, who had not thrown off all decency, however, they might in private have approved of it.—Heavens! what ribald discourse!—what prophaneſs!—what vollies of oaths and imprecations has she not listened to, with a visible satisfaction, from the mouth of that illustrious person!—Yet, I confess all this was too little to make me totally avoid her.—She sent for me this afternoon,—I went,—found her alone, and I thought more serious than usual;—we had not been long together, before *Comus* came in.—I rose, and would have taken leave, but she forced me to sit down again in her peremptory way;—said that she expected her lord home, and we would then go to *whist*;—but in the mean time, *cried she*, as we are a party for *ombre*, we need not be idle.—I was opening my mouth to tell her ladyship, I could not possibly stay the evening, but had not opportunity to utter one syllable, she went hastily out of the room, even as she was speaking, as I imagined to order cards; for I was far from any
 appre-

apprehensions of the monstrous design had been formed against me.—She had no sooner left us, than *Connus* started from his chair, and bolted the door.—I was strangely surprized, as you will easily believe, and asked him what he meant.—The reply he made was such, as I could neither repeat, nor you endure to hear.—Yet filthy, odious as his expressions were, the actions which immediately followed were more detestable.—I almost loath myself for the indignities I was compelled to suffer.—In fine, he endeavoured to drag me to the settee, which you know stands at the upper end of the drawing-room; it was in vain I struggled, in vain I attempted to prevail on him to reflect on the cruelty, the baseness of the crime he was about to perpetrate, especially in a man of his birth, whose humanity should be as extensive as his power.—As much in vain I called out for assistance with my whole force; heaven only heard, or would regard my cries, and sure some supernatural power it was, that in this dreadful moment, gave me strength beyond what could be expected from my sex.—I perfectly fought with him, I tore, I scratched his face, yet alas, all this could not have long defended me, and doubtless I must at last have been the wretched victim of his abominable desires, if his foot had not happened to hitch some how or other in the carpet, which, by our wrestling, was pretty much disordered, and I at that instant, giving him a sudden push, threw his heavy carcase on the floor.—I snatched the blessed opportunity, unfastened the door, and flew down stairs;—he pursued me, but the terror I was in, gave wings to my feet.—I reached the outer gate, where, thinking myself safe, I stopt to take breath, and remember, that as I was going out,
in

in spite of my confusion, I turned to the porter, and said, — *I never knew till now, your lady kept a brothel.* — I own, dear lady *Betty*, my hurry of spirits made me quite forget my appointment with you, but had it been in my head, I could not have thought of appearing before your servants in the condition I then was. — I was ashamed to be seen, even by my own, and doubt not my very chairmen guessed at the adventure had befallen me. — The marks of violence were but two visible in all my form and dress. — Never was poor creature so ruffled, — so torn; — it is now three hours since I came home, yet have not half recovered my fatigue. — I hope, however, to be able to wait on you in the morning, but could not go to bed without letting you know by what accident I was hindered from doing myself that pleasure to night. — I am, dear lady *Betty*,

Your most obliged, and humble servant,

ERMINIA.



EPISTLE X.

From EUPHROSINE to a gentleman, who being a perfect stranger to her, had for a long time pestered her with love-letters, and in his last had desired an answer, and given his direction where it should be sent.

S I R,



THANK you for having at last given me an opportunity of doing what I should have done long ago, had you favoured me with your direction. — I now return you all the letters you have taken

taken the pains to write to me, and after the first, should not even have damaged the seals, had not the superscriptions been always in different hands, so that it was impossible to know they came from the same person, without opening them.

I MIGHT very well be dispensed with for not sending any answer to one who is entirely a stranger to me, and to whom I could not possibly give the least encouragement; but think it proper to comply with your request, in order to put a stop to all future trouble on both sides.

THE little share of reason I am mistress of, assures me, there can be but two motives for your addressing me in this romantic manner. — Either the hope of repairing, by my fortune, some defects yours may labour under, or the whim of diverting yourself at the expence of that vanity you might expect to excite in me; but, Sir, you will presently discover how unlikely it is I should become the dupe of the one or the other of these views.

I HAVE parents who deserve, and have a right to demand my perfect confidence, and from whom it is my *inclination*, as well as it is undoubtedly my *duty*, to conceal nothing; — by them, not only all my *actions*, but my very *will*, shall always be regulated; and to that end I have entreated the favour of whichever of them is in the way, to peruse, before I see it, every letter that shall hereafter be directed to me. — This I am certain is the most effectual method a maid like me can take to secure herself from the numberless artifices of base and designing men. —

Those

Those who have *love* for their *incitement*, and
honour for their *aim*, will never be offended at it.

—I am, as far as prudence permits, and good-
 manners require,

SIR,

Your humble servant,

EUPHROSINE.



EPISTLE XI.

SOPHRONIA to MELISSA, a maid of honour, on
 hearing she had bought a fine Pantine.

My dear cousin,



HAD not refused myself the pleasure
 of waiting on you yesterday, as I pro-
 posed, but happening to call at *Wil-*
dey's for some things I wanted, I was
 told that he had just sold you a very fine *Pantine*;
 and I was apprehensive that to have come in the
 first hurry of your satisfaction in this new play-
 thing, I should have had little of your conver-
 sation on any other subject, and to have offered
 any interruption to the entertainment, might per-
 haps have been a mortification you would not
 easily have forgiven.—It is possible my epistle
 may be equally unpleasing, since I cannot for-
 bear writing what the sincere friendship I have
 for you would certainly have obliged me to speak.
 —There is indeed this difference between remon-
 strances by letter, and those made by word of
 mouth, that the *one* we can throw aside without
 reading, when we find the purport likely to be
 disagreeable, and the other we are compelled to
 listen to thro' decency and good-manners.—I
 have

have a sure way, however, to know whether you treat this in the fashion I have mentioned, and that is by asking you a few questions in it, which I shall expect you to answer the first time we meet.

As I would no more condemn, than I would applaud any thing, without believing at least that some sort of reason justified my so doing, and imagined the use of these painted pieces of pasteboard might have in it somewhat more than I had penetration to discover, as I could go to no polite assembly, without seeing them in the hands of young and old of both sexes. I took the liberty of desiring lady M**, who I perceived was passionately fond of them, to set my judgment right in this point; on which she told me, that playing with her *pantime* was a very pretty amusement when she had nothing to think on. — I was extremely sorry that a woman, turned of threescore, should in all that time have found nothing worthy of remembrance or reflection, and equally concerned when putting the same question to her grand-daughter, she cried, O, *Madam*, a *pantime*, is the most necessary utensil in the world: — *When one has a mind to say or do any thing, one is ashamed to speak, one need but play off the pantime in a particular manner, and one shall be understood presently.* — Had I the same relation to her I have to you, I should have been free enough to have told her, a woman of true sense and honour could have nothing in her heart she would blush at entrusting to her tongue.

I FLATTER myself, dear *Melissa*, with receiving neither of these replies from you, but am not quite so certain you will not tell me, as most

most others have done, that you do it because it is the *fashion*, and that you would not be particular in the circle. — I must therefore warn you beforehand, that I shall not take this as a sufficient excuse; and the rather, as the same might be alledged for following some other modes, no less ridiculous than the *pantine*, which of late years have been established among us, and which are every day invented, as if there were a plot to root common sense out of the nation, and to set up caprice and folly in the throne of reason.

You will wonder, perhaps, that I express myself with so much warmth, on what, I dare say, you look upon as a meer trifle. — I grant it is no more in itself, yet it is such as debases the understanding. — You may remember, cousin, that when we were girls, we were impatient to be women, flattering ourselves that an increase of years would bring with them an increase of knowledge. — Shall we then, when arrived at this wished-for maturity, return again to childhood, and lavish away our time in amusements fit only for hanging-sleeves and a bib-apron! nay, even inferior to those which at that time took up our attention! For the management of our jointed babies served to give us an idea how to behave when we should come to have living ones; and our wax viands, in what manner it was proper to furnish a table with real ones, when mistress of a family. — The *pantine*, therefore, and the *rattle*, I think, ought to be put on the same footing; either of them may contribute to still the cries of the froward infant, before the soul is in any measure enlivened with reason, or capable of knowing with what it is delighted; but both are of equal insignificance, when once the

the nurse resigns her charge, and should be thrown aside at the same time.

I AM sensible, however, I am too serious on the occasion, and have said much more than was necessary to dissuade you from being over-fond of a thing which, it is highly probable, you are weary of already; at least I am sure you are so, if, since it has been in your possession, you have given yourself one moment's thought. — I know you too well, not to know you stand in need of no other monitor than your own good sense, whenever you please to permit it to exert itself; but the incessant hurry attending a court-life, frequently engrosses the mind too much to leave any room for reflections, and this was the sole motive, and is the best excuse for the liberty taken by

Your affectionate kinswoman,
And most humble servant,

SOPHRONIA.



EPISTLE XII.

From ASTREA to her Brother, returning Mr. THOMPSON's Castle of Indolence, which he had lent her, and desired her opinion of.

Dear brother,



HE compliment you pay my understanding, in desiring my opinion of the enclosed poem, is such, as modesty would not permit me to look on as sincere, from any other than yourself; — but I know

know the partial affection with which you honour me, and make not the least doubt if you really think me qualified for the task you enjoin. — I shall therefore make no scruple of communicating my thoughts to you, as they naturally occurred on reading it.

You have often told me, you perceived I was not to be caught with words, and that, as well as I loved music, I was but little delighted, when the notes did not convey some intelligible meaning. — So far I must do myself the justice to acknowledge your observation right; — a pompous stile, — the cadence of a well-turned verse, may give a momentary pleasure to the ear, but it is the sentiment alone that reaches the heart; and I run no risque of forfeiting my judgment, when I say, that in both these Mr. *Tompson* excels in all the pieces with which he has obliged the world; but I am greatly mistaken, if this last does not bear away the prize for the noblest and most laudable aim of a poet. — Here he endeavours to rouse a sleeping nation; — to shame the present age out of that forgetfulness, which has very near lost them the glorious patrimony bequeathed them by their ancestors; and charm them from the embraces of vice, by shewing virtue in the beautiful robes she was wont to be adorned with. — He reminds them, that by *arts and industry* this island rose to such an envied height, and points out the fatal cause by which it sinks, even beneath pity from the neighbouring kingdoms. — Great is the attempt, and worthy of the art, too long debased by flattering eulogies!

BUT here, my dear brother, give me leave to
 VOL. I. D observe,

observe, that it is not to those lost in luxury and impiety, the poet so much speaks, as to those who mean well, wish well, and do well *themselves*, but take not the least pains to make *others* do so;—who content themselves with being innocent spectators, as they imagine, of the mischiefs they cannot avoid seeing, and think it is enough to lament the impending fate of their country, without stretching out a hand for its relief.—But, Sir, according to my way of judging, whoever offers not every thing in his power to *save* in some measure, takes part with the *destroyer*, and may be said to give a tacit consent to the ills he is too indolent to oppose.—You will tell me, that corruption, oppression, luxury, and every kind of vice, have enlisted under their banners the greatest part of mankind, and that it would be vain, romantic, and what not, to combat against such unequal numbers.—You may perhaps add also, that some recent instances have rendered the name of *patriot* ridiculous, even to the lowest rank of people, and that even those of the better sort are apt to suspect it as a term to cover some self-interested view;—that all testimonies of love of country, and public spirit, serve only to make the person who gives them, obnoxious to society, hateful to many, and laughed at by all.

I AM very sorry that I am obliged to own this is but too true, yet I dare say you would not wish to be thought an *atheist*, to avoid the witi-cisms of the libertine for professing the belief of a *God*, nor that *posterity* should brand you with the name of a *traitor* to your country, merely to escape the censure of a *malecontent* by your *cotem-poraries*.—No, I am very certain you have ne-

ver

ver had so much complaisance for the *mode*, as to call in question any part of the mysteries of *religion*; nor for any *minister* or *ministers*, to give your assent to any thing in prejudice of the *commonwealth*; yet I must once more remind you, that some bills have passed, which you could wish had not succeeded, when you were absent. — It is probable your single vote would not have prevented them, and there is a possibility that it might. — I am not very well versed in parliamentary affairs, but have heard from the most knowing, that instances have been, where the majority has not exceeded number one. — Should any such thing happen in your time, and in a matter of the utmost consequence to the nation, with what remorse must you reflect on so fatal an inactivity! — Besides, it is not through the want of your voice alone the common cause might suffer, great is the prevalence of example, and I am pretty confident yours would influence many to be of the same side the question. — I wish, therefore, you could be persuaded not to make such frequent pretences for retiring to your country-seat. — Your gardener will take care of your flower pots, — your steward of your rents: Permit, then, the harmless bucks to range unmolested in your park, — the feathered and the finny race to escape the gun and angle; — a nobler and more interesting cause demands all your attention, — the cause of liberty, — the liberty of posterity! — You cannot be certain that the *enemies* of our happy *constitution* watch not the opportunity of your absence to do that, which the utmost future zeal, and assiduity of its *friends*, would never be able to get repealed.

You may, perhaps, laugh at this as a vain

prophecy, but I have for it the authority of a good old poet, whose works I have heard you frequently quote on other occasions.

*One luckless hour may teem with ills, which all
The cares of future time can ne'er recall.*

*Trust nought to chance ;—those whom base ends
in flame,*

Watch every crisis to compleat their aim.

BUT I have done, at least for the present ; and if you think I have taken too much freedom in these remonstrances, you ought to blame yourself, for desiring I would write my sentiments on a poem, the design of which could not but lead me into such reflections on the growing calamities of my country, and the source of them, as rendered me altogether unable to forbear telling you how ardently I wish to see a person, so near and dear to me, one of the first to break the chains of indolence, and do honour to Mr. Thompson's generous advice ; to which I refer you, and entreat you to consider it with attention ; it may produce this glorious effect, awakening you from the indolence of a retired life, that you may improve your talents in the service of your country. This will exalt your name, and be an infinite satisfaction to,

My dearest brother,

Your sincerely affectionate sister,

And obliged humble servant,

ASTREA.

EPISTLE



EPISTLE XIII.

From MIRA, to a lady who had expressed the utmost surprize at her staying in the country after winter was pretty far advanced; with a detail of the manner in which she passes her time there, and the many solid pleasures which retirement is capable of affording to a thinking mind.

Madam,

IT is now, indeed, the time when the town diversions summon the gay part of the world to quit their rural seats, and shine in the circle of the *beau monde*.—Plays, balls, masquerades, and operas, are already begun.—The country is almost as desolate of inhabitants, as the trees in my forrest are of leaves.—All my acquaintance, in these parts, have left me, for what they call delights more agreeable to the season; yet I am still here,—and what seems most strange to you, am here by my own choice; and think it not the least of those many obligations I owe to the love and complaisance of my dear lord, that he consents to be, a little longer than is usual, absent from the grand council of the nation, rather than remove me from the felicities this recess affords.—But you wonder I am not eaten up with spleen, or dying with vapours, and cannot conceive how I am able to support so long a deprivation of those pleasures, which, tho' far from being an enemy to, I cannot help thinking you greatly over-rate; and charming as you paint them, and

really agreeable as I confess some of them are, you must pardon me, when I say, they cannot, in my opinion, come in any competition with those of retirement.—Here I am free from, and disincumbered with, the insincere civilities,—the vain ceremony,—the fantastic pomp, which the troublesome rank I hold in life obliges me to partake of.—What company,—what amusements can I want, when the wide creation is spread out before me;—when the court of heaven, with all its glories, opens to my view, and an uninterrupted tranquility assists contemplation to lift me above this dull earth, to travel in idea thro' the ætherial regions, and anticipate the privilege of immortality!—Whether the sun appears in all his radiance, or the pale moon shines in her borrowed light;—whether I hail the dawn, or pay my compliments to the evening *Hesperus*;—whether my impatient eye wanders among the unnumbered stars, or loses itself amidst that galaxy of splendor which forms the milky way, my soul seems all dissolved and loosened from its clay;—I feel myself, methinks, already a guest in the celestial abodes, and joining chorus, with the blest inhabitants, in praise and adoration of the Eternal Source of love, of light, and joy.

BUT these are raptures which I cannot at all times indulge, nor indeed ought I to be so entirely absorbed in them, as to forget, that during the time appointed for my stay on earth, I have duties to discharge which cannot be dispensed with.—As I am a *wife*, I am bound to make it my study to please him to whom, by love, law, and the most tender obligations, I am united; and as I am a *mother*, to omit nothing in my power to form the minds of those, to whom I have

have given birth, in such a manner as to render them incapable of doing any thing hereafter unworthy the dignity of a reasonable being. — Above all things, I take care to inculcate into their most early years, the knowledge that they are born for eternity; and while I amuse them with the study of natural philosophy, I turn their reflections on the Supreme Author of all the various and amazing productions they behold with so much pleasure. — I endeavour, as much as possible, to make them less in love with *art* than *nature*, and to condemn all the handy-works of *man*, in comparison with those of *Him who made man*. — To look on the glare of finery and equipage, as the meanest of all trifles, and to consider even beauty (tho' the gift of heaven) as a good, which can no way counterbalance for any defect in the *mind*. — As the precepts I lay down are delivered with a familiarity, which has nothing of the air of lesson, I have the satisfaction to perceive they listen to them with more delight, than to any thing they can hear in the nursery. This gives me cause to hope, that the impressions thus early made on their hearts will not easily be erased.

THUS, madam, have I given you a faithful account of the duties I am employed in, during my retirement from the great world, which, I believe, you will allow are such as leave no time heavy on my hands, and when I assure you, as I can do, with the greatest sincerity, that these studies make the supreme pleasure of my life, you will also cease to wonder, that I am in no haste to visit a city, where it is utterly impossible for me to pursue them with the same freedom I do here. — I must, notwithstanding, submit to

my husband's will, which I am just now informed, has fixed next Tuesday for my departure from this scene of true content. — I bear it however with the less regret, as I shall have the honour of congratulating Sir *Thomas* on the reward of his long faithful passion for the virtuous and beautiful *Clarinda* : I beg, in the mean time, you will make my compliments acceptable to both, and assure them, that they share, with their sister, in the sincere friendship and esteem of,

Madam,

Your most humble servant,

MIRA.



EPISTLE XIV.

SOPHRONIA to OPHELIA, on hearing she had lost her beauty by the small-pox.

My dear OPHELIA,

I Received yours, and rejoice too much in your recovery, to be able to condole with you on any alteration your late illness has made in you ; and, indeed, how great soever it may be, am far from thinking it deserves to be mentioned with that concern you express. — You have encountered death, and foiled him at one of his sharpest weapons ; and if you have received some scars, ought to look upon them rather as trophies of victory, than blemishes. — What if your complexion has lost some part of its

its fair enamel, and your features are not altogether so delicate; the less charms your glass presents you with, the more you will find in your closet; and, deprived of vain pleasure in contemplating the graces of your outward form, you will have the greater leisure to improve and embellish those which are not so easily impaired.

LET us pretend what we will, it is the ambition of attracting admirers, that renders beauty of so much value to all the young and gay; but, if we consider seriously, we shall find that it is virtue, good sense, sweetness of disposition, and complaisance, of which the girdle of *Cytheria* should be composed.—The finest face in the world, without them, will not long maintain its empire over the heart of a man of understanding, as the poet truly says,

*Beauty soon grows familiar to the eye,
Virtue alone has charms that never die.*

Do not think, however, that I am glad to find you are more on a level, than before this accident, with the greatest part of our sex; I confess the beauties of the *person* greatly contribute to set off and render those of the *mind* conspicuous, and for that reason should lament extremely any defect in the *one*, if I were not certain you had enough of the *other*, to engross the whole attention of as many as know you; and that they may every day increase in the lustre of true dignity, is the sincere wish of, my dear *Ophelia*,

Yours,

SOPHRONIA.

End of the FIRST BOOK.



EPISTLES.

BOOK II.

EPISTLE XV.

From SEMANTHE to MIRA, complaining of the hardness of her fate, in being courted by two gentlemen, equally worthy of her affection, yet incapable of giving herself to either, through the capriciousness of her parents; her father absolutely forbidding her to think of the one, and her mother no less implacable against the other.

Dear madam,



Received the favour of yours, with that satisfaction which I am certain all, who can judge of their own happiness, must feel on the like occasion. I have nothing to be vain of, but the friendship of the admirable *Mira*, and notwithstanding the many defects I every day discover in myself, cannot help thinking there is somewhat worthy in me, or I should not have met so many proofs of it. — It is common enough

to

to mistake meer *compassion* for the effects of *liking*, but as you yet are ignorant how much I am an object of the *one*, I may very well flatter myself with being honoured with the *other*;—nay, I have yet a stronger reason to feed this pride in me, that of your loving me, while you imagine me more unworthy than I really am of your regard.—You accuse me, my dear *Mira*, of levity, coquetry, and what not, in encouraging the addresses of *Polydore* and *Lyfander* at the same time.—Alas! how little do you know my soul, or the motives of this seeming instability of humour; but I can no longer fear the apprehension of suffering in your opinion; I will let you into a secret, which I blush not to reveal on my own account, but on that of those for whom duty obliges me always to preserve the highest veneration.—I thank heaven, I have not a heart capable of being agitated with any of those violent emotions I have observed in some of my acquaintance; yet it is not insensible to merit.—That of *Polydore* and *Lyfander* appear so equal to me, that I believe I might be very happy with either; but an unfortunate disagreement between my parents will permit me to be so with neither.—My father, who has made *Polydore* his choice, commands me to receive him as the man who must be one day my husband.—My mother, who is no less in the interest of *Lyfander*, charges me on her blessing, to consider *him* in the same light; and both menace my disobedience with their highest resentment.—What can I do in so severe an exigence?—I neither dare indulge an affection, or maintain an absolute indifference for either the one or the other of these gentlemen.—By the manner in which I am compelled to behave, each thinks he has reason to flatter himself

with having made some impression on me.—
The sole excuse I have for not complying with the desires of *Lysander*, is, that he must not hope for any farther marks of favour from me, 'till he has obtained the consent of my father.—To *Polydore* I say the same thing in relation to my mother.—Thus do I throw some part of the weight of this most vexatious affair on those who, it must be confessed, deserve most to be loaded with it, since it is only an unhappy, and (if I may be allowed to call it so) a faulty disunion between themselves, not any prudential reasons (the characters, fortunes, and families of both my lovers, being equally unexceptionable) that renders each so averie to what the other approves.—My father, however, by this means is continually persecuted by the solicitations of *Lysander*, my mother by those of *Polydore*, and both alike are puzzled for pretences to refuse what they are resolved never to grant. But, madam, judge how much my peace of mind suffers all this time by the caprice of my parents; and I fear will always do so, for I see little room to expect they ever will agree in this, or any other point.—That tenderness I might hope they had for me, as their only child, I have experienced is of no force, when opposed to the pleasure they take in contradicting each other.—I have put my modesty to the utmost stress to make the trial.—When my father insists on my giving myself to *Polydore*, I affect to feel the most passionate inclination for *Lysander*; and when my mother urges the suit of *Lysander*, I pretend the extremest affection for *Polydore*; but my supposed attachment is so far from having any effect on either of them, that they only reproach my folly, as they call it, in the bitterest terms, and tell me I must

must learn to square my wishes by the rule of their *will*.—Heaven knows how gladly I would do so, were once that *will* of *two* become *one*.

I DOUBT not, dearest madam, but after this, you will own I much more deserve your pity than reproof.—I am now arrived at an age, in which, if I ever settle in the world, it is time to do it.—A few years hence I must not think of making my fortune by marriage, but of making the fortune of the man I marry, a thing very inconsistent with my humour; so that upon the whole, as matters are managed in our family, it seems as if I were condemned to lead apes.—This is an apprehension, however, that gives me no pain; but tho' I am not in love either with *Polydore*, or *Lyfander*, I am truly concerned they should waste their time in so vain a pursuit, and am so free from that vanity, which they falsely say is inherent to all our sex, of taking pleasure in a crowd of admirers, that having only *two*, I wish from my heart to be rid of them, since it never will be in my power, without the death of one or other of my parents, which I am far from wishing, to return the generous and sincere affection I am convinced they both have for me, with any thing but dissimulation, since I am equally forbid to *dismiss*, as I am to *engage*, myself with either of them.—It is certain, my father would not permit the visits of *Lyfander*, if my mother did not, in spite of his displeasure, encourage him to come; nor would she suffer *Polydore* to approach me, if my father did not exert the authority of a husband in his favour.—Whenever they happen to meet, though I take all imaginable care to behave alike to both, yet I am not without fears, that the
jealousy

jealousy each has of the other, should at last transport them to some action, which would involve us all in confusion.—If you can advise me to any method, by which I may extricate myself out of this labyrinth of perplexities, or think a change of conduct would amend my condition, I know you will have the goodness to communicate it, with the same sincerity I entreat it.—The desire I have of being directed by a judgment, which will ever be infallible with me, greatly adds to the impatience with which I shall expect your answer.—I do assure you, I am more uneasy than I have words to express, but yet I hope not so much as to make me forget any part of the obligations I owe to you, or that respect which is so much your due on every account, from all the world, but more particularly from,

Dear madam,

Your most faithful, and devoted servant,

SEMANTHE.



EPISTLE



EPISTLE XVI.

SABINA to MIRA, revealing to her the secret of her amour with LYCIDAS; the discovery made of it by her father; his sending for his son, in order to revenge the injury done to their family; the duel fought between the lover and the brother, in which the latter was killed upon the spot; concluding with the just remorse and despair she is in, at having been the cause of so dreadful a tragedy.

Madam,



COULD my fatal story have been kept a secret, I certainly never should have revealed it, even to you; but rather chose to have stole myself away in silence from all who had ever known me, and wasted the wretched remnant of my days in some such place, as Mr. Rowe has made his fair penitent describe:

*An unfrequented vale, o'ergrown with trees,
Mossy and old, within whose lonesome shade
Ravens and birds ill-omen'd only dwell:
No sound to break the silence, but a brook,
That bubbling winds among the weeds; no mark
Of any human shape that had been there,
Unless a skeleton of some poor wretch,
Who had long since, like me by love undone,
Sought that sad place out, to despair and die in.*

BUT O, incomparable Mira, my crime is published by the dire effects; — it is too flagrant

to

to be hid ; — earth, as well as the all-seeing eye of heaven, is witness of my shame. — The great distance you are at, alone prevents you from being already acquainted with it ; your return cannot fail of presenting you with every aggravating circumstance ; but though I am sure of your knowing all from the mouth of fame, as my ill conduct admits of no excuse, I know not, if you were even here, whether I should dare to meet that virtuous indignation, which, however mild your words might be, would not be restrained from sparkling in your eyes at hearing a declaration, such as the good opinion you had of me, would render strangely surprizing. — But my paper cannot blush, and will transmit what, perhaps, I should have wanted courage to speak. — I doubt not, but by this sad prelude, you guess part of what I am about to write ; especially as you have often seen *Lycidas* with me, and told me you wished I might not one day find him dangerous to my peace. — O, too prophetic words, how dearly have I experienced the truth of them ! — You might have added *virtue* too. — *Virtue* and *peace* go hand-in-hand, and both are irrecoverably lost to me. — There needs no more to make my shame apparent ; — but if there does, if partial friendship seeks to find a meaning in my words, to render me less guilty, think ! O think ! what it is a man, void of all regard to aught, but the gratification of his wild desires, will ask, when passion prompts, and opportunity invites ; and what a maid, believing, — fond, — with fancied merit charmed, in an unguarded hour, may be prevailed upon to grant, then tell yourself that cruel seducer is *Lycidas*, — that yielding, ruined creature, the unfortunate *Sabina*.

YET

YET would I could stop here! — that my undoing were all I had to unfold; but there is a dreadful consequence, which makes my offence unpitiable here; — unpardonable, I fear, hereafter. — Abandoned to all sense of honour, reputation, and even common prudence, I took so little care to hide my infamy, that it soon reached my father's ears; — a letter, he intercepted, confirmed what he had heard. — No words can paint the extremity of his grief and rage. — Scarce could he refrain from making me the victim of his fury. — O, would to heaven it had been all let loose upon me; just had been the doom, and I had blest the blow. — But my poor life was insufficient to atone for the dishonour brought upon his family. — He locked me into my chamber, then sent the same instant for my brother, who happened to be at Sir *John* * * * *, — he made too obedient haste to obey the fatal summons, and also to resolve on taking that revenge on my betrayer, which my father's age and infirmities would not permit him to attempt himself.

BUT let me haste to end the horrid tale, or the distraction I am in will rob me of the power, and I shall leave you in suspense. — My brother sent that same night a challenge to *Lycidas*, which being accepted, the next morning they met and fought: — Heaven, for my greater punishment, thought fit to give the victory to him who least deserved it, and my unhappy brother was brought home breathless. — The house echoed with shrieks and cries; — a confused noise filled every room. — Impatient to be satisfied, and trembling, though I was yet ignorant of the occasion, I forced the lock of my door,
and

and flew down stairs into the parlour, where the first object that presented itself, was the now cold corpse of my dear brother, and near him my father, upheld by his servants, in agonies which seemed mortal.—As soon as he beheld me, *O serpent*, cried he, *behold thy works! — the fruits of thy cursed folly!* — These words, and the volley of execrations I heard thundered out against *Lycidas*, left me no room to doubt the truth. — Sure in that moment I felt some portion of what the damned endure.—I flew to my father's sword, which lay upon a table, and had plunged it into my breast, had I not been prevented by some of the neighbours, whom this sad accident had brought into the house.—I was afterwards forced back into my chamber, where I have ever since remained, in a condition little different from madness.—A nurse, who attended me in my infant days, keeps continually by me, to prevent the violence my despair had threatened, and comfort me all she is able.—Needless, alas! and vain her tender cares;—there wants no sword or poison to destroy me.—Terrors unutterable, inconceivable, prey on my vitals:—Life flies alarmed from pulse to pulse, and soon will be driven out from every seat.—Yes, madam, I feel I am going to that unknown land, *from whose bourn, as Shakespear expresses it, no traveller returns.*—O, were the prospect clear before me, how gladly would I wing my way, and leave this load of infamy behind.—Aid me, my guardian angel!—Aid me, all ye celestial spirits, who delight in acts of mercy and benevolence! support my feeble courage! Whisper in my ear, that when my soul shakes off this guilty clay, the gates of *paradise* will not be barred against me!—that my repentance comes not too late,
and

and will atone — But here again I am shocked!
 — my heart shudders! — the blood forsakes its
 natural course, and shoots convulsive pangs thro'
 my whole frame? — repentance, did I say! —
 How can I hope my repentance is sincere, when
 I cannot yet bring myself to hate the author of
 my ruin; when my sinful mind still presents the
 murderer of my brother, with all those charms
 which assisted him in the murder of my inno-
 cence! — O, how can I expect succour from
 those beings, who are themselves all purity,
 while I retain any part of those impure imagi-
 nations which joined with *Lycidas* to undo me!
 pity me! — pray for me! — It is all can now be
 done for your despairing, dying friend,

SABINA.

P. S. Just as I had finished the above, I heard
 that *Lycidas* has escaped the pursuit made after
 him, and that my father's discomposure of
 mind has thrown him into so violent a fever,
 that there is no hope of his recovery! —
 What! — O, what must become of me! —
 Adieu, perhaps, for ever!



EPISTLE XVII.

*From ATHALIA, to a gentleman, who had argued
 that no man could be an ill husband, who had an
 endearing wife.*

YOU last night carried all before you;
 but I would not have you imagine your
 arguments unanswerable, because no-
 body attempted to confute them. —
 Thank rather the good-nature of the company,
 and

and ascribe nothing to the justice of the cause you took upon you to defend.—All your wit and eloquence would have been ineffectual, to persuade people into a belief of what every day's experience contradicts:—But *Emilia* was present, and as you are upon the point of being married to her, it would have been too cruel in us to have urged any thing, which might have deterred her, after she becomes a wife, from behaving in that endearing manner, to which I will not doubt but you may be one of those husbands, who will make an adequate return.

BUT, Sir, all your sex are not of that grateful disposition, as I could shew by a multiplicity of proofs, even among my own acquaintance;—one, however, I fancy will be sufficient, and give too plain a conviction, for you to renew any discourse on this head, unless in private to your mistress.

I WAS this morning at my brother's;—you know how much the public affairs, he is engaged in, take him up.—While I was waiting in his dressing-room, till he had dispatched some people he had business with, a letter lying half open on his toilet, tempted my curiosity to peep into it;—I found it so admirably well adapted to the design I had of taking the first opportunity of shewing you the error you are in at present, that I hastily transcribed it, with a resolution of sending it to you, as I now do, flattering myself, that when you have read it, you will agree with me in acknowledging, that if the endearments of such a woman as *Cleomelia*, joined to the immense obligations her husband has to her, render her rather distasteful than the contrary, there are

not

not many of our sex, who have reason to expect theirs will be agreeable.

I SINCERELY wish, nevertheless, that those you may meet with from *Emilia*, may really receive all you seem to think they merit from a husband.—I give you my solemn promise never to mention one word to her of the enclosed, and

am,

SIR,

Your most humble servant,

ATHALIA.



EPISTLE XVIII.

[*Enclosed in the foregoing.*]

*From the Earl of **, to the Hon. Mr. ***.*

Dear Jack,



LL my friends have had so little of my company since I have been *wived*, that none of you have any reason to regret my leaving *London*.—My father-in-law, I thank him, takes me with him to make a country visit, a favour for which I am much more indebted to him, than for the fortune he bribed me with to marry his daughter.—I shall now have a little respite from the fulsome sounds of my *dear*, and my *dear Lord*, at the beginning of every sentence, and sometimes too accompanied with a kiss, or perhaps a squeeze of the hand, yet more tiresome and impertinent to a man of taste.—But if the old fellow, who thinks this mighty pretty, would but once take a trip into the other world, I should make her behave
more

more like a woman of this, or leave her to a separate maintenance.—The moment of my return, shall bring you word where I am; and in spite of my matrimonial yoke, will steal one night, to enjoy your company, and Tom ****'s, over a bottle of *champaigne*, with two or three girls of wit and spirit.—Till when, I am,

Dear Jack,

Yours, &c.



EPISTLE XIX.

*From EUSEBIA to the bishop of **, on the power of divine music. With some hints of a proposal for the better encouraging it in these kingdoms.*

MY LORD,

IT is a vulgar aphorism, that those who are untouched with music, have no souls.—What I suppose is meant by it is, that such people are incapable of relishing the joys of immortality (among the infinity of which, seraphic sounds are always reckoned as a part) and I should be very apt to subscribe to this opinion, were I not confident, that whatever obstructions there may be in our organs of harmony, they will be all removed with our other imperfections, when we arrive at the mansions of eternity.—It is nevertheless, methinks, the business of us all, while we remain on earth, to endeavour, as much as in us lies, to fit ourselves for the society we hope to enjoy hereafter; and that this can be done by no method more likely to succeed, than by the solemnity of church-music,

music, is obvious, by the power hamonious notes have on the mind, to whatever purpose they are applied.—We are told, my lord, the lyre of *Timotheus* had that persuasive force, as to inspire in the breasts of all who heard it, any passion he pleased, or to convert, in an instant, the extremest emotion, nature, or circumstances had imprinted there, into its contrary.—How much greater then must be its energy, when turned in praises to that Supreme Being of beings, whom the most hardened sinner in his heart acknowledges and reveres!—So efficacious is it, and so sublime the ideas, which elevate the soul to rapturous contemplation of that Eternal Fountain of all harmony, that I know not whether the royal prophet merited that glorious appellation of *the man after God's own heart* less by his sacred hymns, than by his other acts of devotion; and was not equally great in driving the evil spirit out of *Saul*, as in conquering *Goliath*, and the host of the *Philistines*.

I WAS led into these reflections by being last night at Mr. *Handel's* fine oratorio of *Joshua*, where, though the words were not quite so elegant, nor so well as I could have wished adapted to the music, I was transported into the most divine extasy.—I closed my eyes, and imagined myself amidst the angelic choir in the bright regions of everlasting day, chanting the praises of my Great Creator, and his ineffable *Messiah*.—I seemed, methought, to have nothing of this gross earth about me, but was all soul!—all spirit!—

I CANNOT help thinking, but that entertainments of this nature, frequently exhibited, would have an effect over the most obdurate minds,
and

and go a great way in reforming an age, which seems degenerating equally into an irreverence for the Deity, and a brutality of behaviour to each other; but as this depravity of taste, of principles, and manners, has spread itself from *London* even to the remotest parts of this island, I should be glad there were *oratorios* established in every city and great town throughout the kingdom; but even then, to be of general service, they ought to be given *gratis*, and all degrees of people allowed to partake of them, otherwise it is but an inconsiderable number, in comparison of the whole, whose fortunes would admit of their being improved this way.

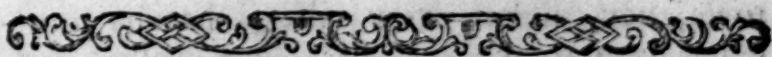
It would, therefore, be an act truly worthy of the *British* nobility, clergy, and gentry, to enter into a subscription, for the bringing up to music, such of our youth, of both sexes, who are qualified either for the vocal or instrumental part, and settling a fund for maintaining them decently, and so as not to be obliged to follow any other vocation, nor perform in any other kind of entertainment. — These should all be under the inspection of the minister of the place to which they belong, who, as far as he is able, should take care they were guilty of nothing in private life, that should disgrace, or bring an odium on their public character, which, by their officiating in sacred worship, ought always to be held in estimation.

If any one should object, that the calamities of the times will not at present admit of any additional expence, I think the answer is easy. — There are modish expences, which all reasonable people allow would be much more for the glory
of

of the nation to retrench.—Many of our *public diversions* are no other than *public nuisances*, and tend to the overthrow of all religion, morality, and even common sense; and were they to be abolished in favour of those seminaries of divine music, I have been speaking of, I am pretty certain it would appear, on calculating the expence of both, that *virtue* might be purchased at a much cheaper rate than *vice*.

BUT however impracticable this scheme may be, I dare flatter myself, your lordship will believe it is well meant; and know you are too sincere a lover, as well as too great an example of piety and humanity, to be offended at any thing proceeding from such motives.—I shall therefore make no apology for the liberty I have taken, and only assure you, I have the honour to be, your lordship's

Most dutiful, and obedient servant,
EUSEBIA.



EPISTLE XX.

From CARICLEA to ARABELLA, giving her an account how she relieved the country people from the terrors they were in of a supposed apparition in Broxbon Wood. With some part of the story of The lady of the cave.

Dear ARABELLA,

SUPPOSE by this time you begin to imagine that the gay sylvian scenes of Hertfordshire have made me forgetful of every thing I left behind me in London; but I do assure you, tho' I have been very

much taken up in a way, perhaps, you little think of, that of doing good in my generation, I should not have been here ten whole days without writing, had it been in my power to have entertained you with any other subject, than one which I know is the most disagreeable of any.— In fine, I have seen you too much alarmed at every story has been told of apparitions, to send you an account of one from the country; but as the danger is over, and I can now affirm, that a spirit, which has made a great noise here, is found to be real flesh and blood existing, I may venture to give you the narrative, not only as an amusement, but also as I am in hopes it may contribute to rid you of those vain apprehensions, by shewing on what slight foundations, tales of this nature are generally built.

I KNOW not how it comes to pass, but I have observed in most country places I have been, the people are strangely infatuated with a belief of ghosts and spirits:—According to them, every town, nay, almost every village, has its particular dæmon, which haunts lone walks, and gloomy forests; but till my coming down this time, I never heard of any such thing in these parts, and therefore was now the more surprized to find, on my arrival, every one in the extremest terror, on account of an apparition, which they told me appeared even, at noon-day, in *Broxbon* wood.—This spirit, they said, had the form of a woman, was in white robes, and sometimes seemed to glitter all over like a star.— They added, that while at a distance, she only glided along very slow between the trees of that thick forest, but when any person had courage to go nearer to her, moved much faster, and by degrees

degrees vanished. — As she had been never seen in any other place, they gave her the name of the *White devil of Broxbon wood*. — Not one of our family, except my uncle and aunt, who are both confined to their chamber, he by a fit of the gout, and she, by her complaisance in keeping him company, but what affirmed they have seen this phantom various times; but though none of them pretend they have received any hurt from it, or that it ever assumed any frightful shape, yet the thoughts that one from the dead was come among them, put them into such a panic, that it was not without great difficulty, any of the servants could be prevailed upon to go to the next market-town for provisions, there being no other way, than through the wood, and some even chose to lose their places, rather than hazard encountering the *white devil*.

I ENDEAVOURED all I could to reason those creatures into more courage. — I represented to them, that in case there were any such thing in reality, as the spirits of deceased persons being permitted to appear, how improbable it was that they should quit the mansions of eternal rest, and revisit the earth, only to shew themselves, and scare those who were once their fellow-creatures, without any other business, or errand whatsoever; — but all this was talking to the wind; they insisting that it was a ghost they had seen, would by no arguments be dissuaded, and no doubt thought me very prophane for making so slight of it: — In a word, the story was so much attested, and by such numbers, that my uncle himself, though a man the farthest in the world from superstition, told me he knew not well what to think of it, and wished he were able to walk out

himself, in order to form a better judgment.—For my part, I could not forbear laughing at the whole, and urged that it was certainly either a woman, who lived on the other side the wood, and came to indulge her melancholy in that solitary recess, or one who walked there with design to impose on weak minds, and divert herself at the expence of their credulity.—To which he replied, that the latter of these suggestions might probably be right; but as to the former, he had been at the pains of sending to all the gentlemen's seats near that place, and was well assured there was no person in any of them, that amused herself in that manner; but, on the contrary, many on the other side the wood had also seen it, and were equally terrified and amazed.

ALL this would not persuade me to believe any thing of the matter, and having been used to walk frequently in this wood whenever I came to my uncle's, would not now deny myself that pleasure, though much I found was said of my presumption in so doing.—But I was obliged to exert all my authority to get my maid along with me, the stories she had been told having rendered her as much a coward, as the most timid of them all.—She durst not, however, absolutely refuse, and so followed me;—but tho' we went a considerable way into this formidable place, even much farther than I had ever done before in my life, we met no ghost, nor any thing to justify the accounts had been given us of one; so that she began to assume resolution enough, not only to attend me chearfully the next time we walked, but also to rally those who still persisted in their belief.

IT was either the third or the fourth day, I cannot be positive which, that we were rambling as usual, when happening to have forgot my snuff-box, I sent her back to fetch it, promising, at the same time, that I would not quit the place she left me in, till her return. She obeyed, though I could perceive with a reluctance, which some remains of fear occasioned in her; and I sat down at the foot of a large oak, in one of the thickest parts of the wood. I had not been in this posture above six minutes, before I was surprized with the sound of a very sweet and harmonious voice, singing at some distance, yet near enough for me to hear the words; which were these:

Give me love, and liberty:

From an iron grate,

And the man I bate,

Dear fortune set me free.

ON this I turned my head, and plainly enough discerned through the branches of the trees, somewhat that appeared like a woman, and habited, as they had said, in white garments, which seemed to flow loose in the wind;—her back was towards me, and she seemed moving farther, but in a quite careless *degagé* manner, and still continued singing:—As I doubted not but this was the apparition so much talked of, I resolved to find the truth, if possible.—*If it be a ghost,* said I to myself, *it is certainly a very harmless, merry one.*—I do not tell you, however, that I did not feel some little palpitation, but I got the better of it; and rising with as little noise as I could, went in the same tract the *white thing* (for I knew not what to call it) pushed on be-

fore me.—It was when I first got up, as I said before, a good distance from me, but upon the rustling my cloaths made among the shrubs, as I suppose, left off singing, and moved considerably faster, as the people affirmed it always did at the approach of any one: At length it ran with so much swiftness, that I was obliged to do so too, or must have soon lost sight of it, and then might have imagined with others, that it had the power of becoming invisible whenever it pleased.—My feet, however, were nimble enough to enable my eyes to pursue it quite out of the wood, into a great wide common, where, on coming to a pretty high hill, it escaped me, on the other side; but fully perswaded in my mind that I should recover it again, as soon as I got over the present impediment which barred my view, I redoubled the race I had taken.—But here I found myself deceived.—I easily ascended this mount, which commanded the whole common, but neither saw what I was in chase of, nor any house, hut, grove, nor even thicket, where any creature could be concealed;—this indeed alarmed me;—loth I was to think the figure I had seen was any thing more than mortal, yet could conceive no natural means by which it should elude my sight, in such an instant, for at most I could not have been, during the whole pursuit, more than fifty yards behind.—I descended slowly, still throwing my eyes from side to side, though now without hope of recovering what I had lost, when as I was deeply musing on this adventure, I was struck on a sudden with somewhat that looked like smoke, coming out of the side of the hill I had just come over.—On which I drew nearer, and found it was so indeed, and that near the
hole

hole whence it proceeded, there was an opening cut out of the earth, which seemed as if a passage to some subterranean cavern.—You will allow I had good courage to attempt exploring the secrets of such a place, yet did I venture to go in, though it was so low at the entrance, that I was obliged to stoop almost double.—As I advanced a few paces, I found it, however, somewhat more lofty, and I proceeded for I believe three times the length of myself, till I came into a pretty wide place, but would have been entirely dark, only for a lamp which burned at one corner of it, and which plainly discovered to me the form I had pursued, sitting just opposite to me, and a woman holding a basin to her, in which she was washing her hands.—The light was so disposed, that she could not avoid seeing me, and starting up came forward in a good deal of confusion.—Indeed I was in little less, but stammered out as handsome an apology as I could for my intrusion; by the time I had done speaking, she had recovered herself enough to reply, *Though* (said she, in the most obliging accents) *I neither desire nor could expect any guests in a place such as this, where I flattered myself with being effectually hid from all the world, yet as you are of my own sex, and have the appearance of one who will be far from doing me a prejudice, such welcome as is in my power to give, you may command.* With these words she took me by the hand, and in the most polite manner led me to a seat, ordering her attendant at the same time to get more light.

HER commands were no sooner given than obeyed:—Two large candles were immediately lighted and I had a full prospect of every thing

about me, but the lady herself for a time engrossed my attention too much to regard any thing beside:—She was not what one may call a perfect beauty, but yet much more lovely than many I have seen who are celebrated for such;—her age seemed not to exceed eighteen, and, as I was afterwards informed, had not yet attained to that; but she was tall, admirably well-shaped, had a fine complexion, and somewhat of an uncommon vivacity in her eyes, which gave a lustre to her whole frame:—She had on a *robe de chambre*, of white lutestring, shot with silver, which doubtless it was that had acquired her the name of the *white devil*, and also made those who happened to see her in the sunshine say, she had the glitter of a star.—I could not help smiling at the thoughts of what had been told me; which she taking notice of, I frankly related to her the rumours her appearance had occasioned, the fright the country people were in, and the whole motives of that curiosity she had been so good to pardon.—She laughed excessively at it, but assured me that tho' she ought to be sorry for having been the cause of so much terror and confusion, yet it would be impossible for her to regret it very much, if good-nature would excite me to a continuance of those visits my curiosity had begun; *and to engage you to this act of compassion*, pursued she, *I must entreat you to believe no dishonourable action, nor even the view of any, has made me seek a shelter in this cave.*—I replied, that they must have a very small share of penetration, who needed the testimony of her words, for what her appearance alone was a sufficient proof.

AFTER some few civilities of this sort, I
would

would have taken my leave, but she desired, as it was the hour for tea, I would give her the pleasure of my company.—I must confess I was a little startled at the name of *tea*; for I could not imagine by what magic art any such thing could be prepared in the place we were; for I will now acquaint you with the furniture of it.—There was neither grate, chair, nor table; hoops of osier twisted together, somewhat like the wicker of which baskets are made, laid cross-ways, one above another, supporting a long piece of board, from one end of the cave to the other, served as a bench, and was what we both were seated upon,—an old tub, turned the bottom upwards, supplied the place of a table, and that fire, the smoke of which had been my director, was contained between two little piles of broken bricks.—The candles, which were lighted up at my approach, were stuck in pieces of clay, with holes in them, and made flat at the bottom.—A great cupboard, that seemed of the same age with *Noah's* ark, with two bundles rolled up, and disposed in different angles, which, as I afterwards understood, were the beds on which the family reposed, compleated all the moveables of the apartment.—Yet, notwithstanding this wretched appearance, we had our tea served very elegantly.—The maid brought a decanter, with water clear as the chrystal that enclosed it, and having set it on the fire, laid a clean damask napkin over the tub-table, and placed a tea-pot, two cups and saucers, with a fop-bason of as fine china as I ever saw.—This done, she fetched from the antique cupboard a tea-chest, richly inlaid with mother of pearl and amber, out of which she took a silver cannister, and gold spoons.—We had also ex-

ceeding good cake; but the plate in which it was presented, was not at all of a piece with the rest of the equipage; it was of coarse earthen ware, and had the misfortune to have lost more than one half the brim.

So many contradictions joined to make an oddity which I could not imagine a possibility of accounting for.—The young lady easily saw into my thoughts, and as soon as our repast was ended, told me she would not deprive me any longer of the light of the sun, but attend me if I would give her leave, into the upper-world: I own the proposal was very agreeable to me, and we walked together till we came to a grove, formed by the hand of nature, and more beautiful than art could have made it; there we sat down, and after ushering in what she was about to say, with some compliments on the motives which this first interview had given her, of a perfect confidence in my sincerity, unfolded the whole mystery of her retirement, and all that had so much surprized me in beholding.

SHE told me she was the daughter of * * * *, by whom she was promised in her infancy to the * * *, but that as she grew up, she could not be prevailed upon to entertain any sentiments, but those of an implacable aversion for her intended bridegroom.—That she had endeavoured, by prayers and tears, not only to her father, but also by declaring her hatred to himself, to convince both, of the miseries such an union must produce; but all without the least effect.—* * * * found an advantage to his family by the match, and was obstinate in his resolution; nor would the * * * recede from his pretensions,
either

either because he really loved her, or that his pride would not suffer him to be disappointed in a thing every body supposed him certain of possessing.—As she was now looked upon of sufficient years, the wedding-day was appointed, and she saw the preparations making for it, with a horror which determined her to run all hazards, rather than it should be compleated.—Finding no way to avoid it, but to quit her father's house, she resolved on doing so; but to whom to have recourse she knew not, not daring to go to any of her friends or kindred, as she was certain search would be made for her in every house which could be suspected to give her shelter.—In this distress she communicated all to her woman, who told her she had a kinsman in *Hertfordshire*, who had indeed but an ordinary habitaion, yet such a one as might conceal her 'till the search should be entirely over, and she might then repair to such of her relations who had the most influence over her father, in order to bring about a reconciliation.—Never, *said she*, had I known so much transport, as this proposal gave me.—We set immediately about packing up a little bundle of linnen, and some few necessaries, which I thought the mean place I was going to, would not be able to supply me with; and the next morning, by day-break, got out of the house, without being seen by any of the family, and came down in the *Hertford* stage.—Her kinsman, she told me, lived within two small miles of that town, which we easily walked; but how greatly was I disappointed, when, being arrived, we were told that his goods had long ago been seized for rent; that he had been turned out of his house, with all his family; and that, nobody caring to receive them on ac-

count of their poverty, he had been obliged to dig himself a cave, where he soon after died of grief, but that his wife still lived in the same place : they then directed us, *continued she*, to the cave where you found me, which I thought it better to content myself with, than to go to any inn, where I might have been seen by some one who had known me ; and my servant had no acquaintance, besides this poor widow, in all these parts. — She added, that it was a fortnight since she came, and did not dare to quit it as yet.

AFTER thanking her for the confidence she reposed in me, I asked her several questions concerning her manner of life, and what she did for provisions ? To which she replied, that the widow went every day to *Ware*, and brought her in wherewith to support nature, which was all she desired, or could expect while in her state of exile.

SHE gave me this detail with so much cheerfulness, and interspersed it with so many pleasantries, that it was easy to see her misfortunes had not consumed her spirits ; it growing towards sun-set, when she had finished, I was obliged to take my leave, but not without a promise of meeting her, the next morning, in the same grove.

You may imagine, dear *Arabella*, with how much triumph of mind I came home, on account of the discovery I had made of the supposed spirit. — I found my poor *Abigail* at the edge of the wood, with two or three of my uncle's servants, who had been sent in quest of me, after she had missed me at the place I had ordered her
to

to come to. — They doubted not but the spirit had run away with me ; but my uncle and aunt were in pain, lest some other ill accident had befallen me. — My appearance, however, made all things easy, and I related the whole story, in the same manner I have done to you, only concealed the names and quality of the persons concerned, from all but my uncle and aunt, whose discretion I too well knew to make a doubt of, or that they would not do as I earnestly wished in my heart, which was to invite this distressed young lady to their house. I had no sooner finished my narration, than they cried out both together, *Why, niece, did you not bring her from that wretched place?* — I told them, it was a liberty I would not presume to take, but since they had given me authority, I would let her know, the favour they intended her, the next day.

To conclude ; I obeyed their commands, and the dictates of my own inclination. — She is now with us. — I am quite charmed with my new friend ; — she seems no less so with me ; and if she thinks I have done her any service, in removing her from so incommodious a situation, I know myself well repaid in her polite and agreeable conversation. — My aunt is equally pleased with her, and my uncle takes so much part in her distress, that (though he is still very lame) he resolves to go to *London*, some day this week, and try how far her father's humanity can be wrought on to break off the intended marriage ; for on no other terms does she desire a reconciliation, but will sooner forego all the hopes to which her birth entitles her, and get her bread by service, than ever yield to become the wife of the * * *.

As soon as I know the success of this negotiation, I will not fail to communicate it to you ; in the mean time I flatter myself you will take this as a sufficient excuse for my long silence, and withdraw no part of that friendship, with which you have hitherto favoured

Your

CARICLEA.



EPISTLE XXI.

From the same to ARABELLA, with a farther account of The lady of the cave.

TH E concern you express for our young guest, and impatience for the sequel of her adventures, is so great a proof of your good nature, that it would be unpardonable in me not to give you all the satisfaction in my power ; but that is as yet so little, that I should scarce have wrote, but to shew my readiness in obeying your commands.—I think, for my part, every thing belonging to this lady must be mysterious, and that whoever interest themselves in her affairs, must also take a fancy to deal in ambiguities :—But, that I may not seem to do so too, I will relate in a few words all we know here of the matter.

My uncle set out on his expedition last Monday was seven-night.—His first letter gave an account of his safe arrival, but no more ; nor
indeed

indeed could any more be expected from that.—The second, which was about five days after, related that he had seen M****, that he had been extremely well received by him, and did not doubt but every thing would be accommodated agreeable to *The lady of the cave*; (for so he always calls her.)—Since this, we heard nothing from him, 'till last night, when a large portmantua, with a great many rich suits of cloaths, and other wearing-apparel, which she had no opportunity of bringing away with her, came down by the stage-coach, and with it a third letter to my aunt, wherein my uncle desires her to prepare the most elegant entertainment the country can furnish out, against next Friday, on which day he proposes being at home, and says, he shall bring with him a stranger of condition, and for whom he has a particular esteem.—He then tells her, she may acquaint the young lady, that she must prepare to receive him as the person who has now the sole power over her; that her father has invested him with all his authority, by way of guardian, and adds, in very humorous terms, that she must not flatter herself with escaping from him, in case he should happen to enjoin any thing she might not so well relish.—All this we can make nothing of; but, by the air of merriment, which runs through the whole, have no room to doubt but that he is very much pleased, and has succeeded in his negotiation, though we are entirely in the dark, by what means, or on what conditions.

THE poor young lady is, however, in very great agitations! she trembles lest this stranger, who comes down with my uncle, should be her father, and that under the pretence of being reconciled,

reconciled, he should take her home with him and compel her at last to marry the ***. Neither my aunt, nor myself, omit any thing in our power to put other thoughts into her head, but all we can say is insufficient to make her easy.— She can no way conceive for what reason her father should delegate his authority over her (while living) to any other person; and this it is, which chiefly makes her fear my uncle has been imposed upon by a feigned condescension on his part.

BUT I am too well assured of my uncle's good sense and penetration, to harbour the least thought of his being capable of suffering so gross a deception to pass upon him; nor is it indeed probable, that the other would attempt to treat a person, of his rank and character in the world, in such a manner.— We are all, notwithstanding, in a good deal of suspense, and long for Friday with as much impatience as ever a young heir did for the arrival of dear one-and-twenty.

WHEN relieved from this uneasy situation, you may depend on being informed of the result, as soon as the post can bring it from,

Dear *Arabella*,

Yours,

CARICLEA.



EPISTLE



EPISTLE XXII.

From the same to ARABELLA, with the sequel of the adventure contained in the two former.



HE riddle is at last explained.—My uncle is returned, and has brought with him—I will not tell you who, till I have prepared you to give him that welcome in your imagination, which he certainly deserves.—Besides, it would be letting you into the plot too soon, and destroying that surprize, which so much heightens the beauty of any great catastrophe.—Gradually then to begin;—My uncle no sooner got to *London*, than he went to *M*****, whom he found in a good deal of perplexity, not only on account of the little hope he had of recovering his daughter, but also on that of some consequences her elopement had occasioned, which he did not as yet think fit to mention.—My uncle told him, he had casually heard of a young lady, who was said to be concealed at the house of one of his intimate friends, and having good reasons for suspecting it was his daughter, he had taken the liberty to wait on him, in order to assure him that, in case the person he meant was really her, he need be under no apprehensions that she had flown from his authority, on any motive which could bring dishonour on his family; and then proceeded to excuse this act of disobedience in her, by remonstrating how impossible it was for any considerations to overcome an aversion, grounded on a natural antipathy, and the ill effects

effects which forced marriages, for the most part, produce.

M**** heard him with a great deal of patience, and then told him, that he had not so strenuously insisted on his daughter's obedience in this point, on the score of any advantage he proposed by the marriage, but merely to comply with the promise he had given to ***; *for in truth*, said he, *I have heard some things of late concerning him, which had I known before, I never should have approved of the alliance.*—To these he added many other expressions, which made my uncle see that a reconciliation between them would not be difficult to accomplish; and having brought him entirely into the disposition he wished, at length ventured to inform him, that to his certain knowledge, the young lady he had mentioned, was no other than his daughter; but at the same time told him, that he must not expect to be made acquainted with the place of her retreat, till he had given his word and honour to forgive her, and to make no use of his authority as a parent to force her inclinations. To this, the other said he would readily agree, provided still her conduct, since her quitting his house, had given him no fresh subject of complaint against her.

My uncle thought there needed no more from a person who he found was nicely tenacious of his promises, and immediately related the whole story of her concealment in the cave, how I had found her there, and afterwards, at his desire, brought her home with me.—The good old gentleman, it seems, listened to this recital with tears of joy, and as soon as it was ended, embraced

braced my uncle, said he never could sufficiently acknowledge the obligations he had to him, called him the protector of his daughter's and his family's honour, and swore he should always regard him with much more than a brotherly affection.

SUCH extraordinary demonstrations of gratitude, for an action, which, in reality, was no more than common humanity would have obliged any man to, very much embarrassed my uncle; he was not sorry, however, to find the impression it made on him, because it could not but facilitate the good work he had so happily begun. — Indeed there now required no more solicitations; — the father threw off all reserve, and frankly owned, that as things had happened, he was so far from being troubled his daughter had been guilty of swerving from that duty, *she* had in every other article observed towards him, that he rather looked on what *she* had done, as inspired by Divine Providence. — *For a girl of her years, said he, to run all hazards, expose herself to all dangers, rather than become the wife of a man, whose exterior form has nothing to create so strong an aversion, seems to me to have something supernatural in it; and I must think it was by the direction of her guardian angel, that she took this only method to avoid a man, whom I am now well convinced she never could have been happy with, even had her love been as extreme as her hatred is at present.*

ALL this a little astonished my uncle; but the other soon put an end to the suspense he was in, by telling him on what occasion his sentiments were changed, so much to the reverse of what they had been.

It

It seems, some little time before it was publicly known that *M***** had resolved to dispose of his daughter to the *****, a young gentleman of family, equal in fortune to him, and much his superior in accomplishments and personal graces, came to demand permission to make his addresses to that young beauty; but the father was obliged to reject his offers, on account of his promise being already given; on which the other desisted.—The father, however, after her elopement, was not without some apprehensions, she had privately encouraged the passion of this new lover, and might possibly return it in a manner, no way to the advantage of her character; till the rivals happening to meet, in public company, and this lady being the topic of conversation, the ***** spoke of her in terms highly injurious, which the other, who truly loved, though without hopes, resented, by sending him a challenge the next morning; but the ***** refused to accept it, saying he knew better things than to fight on the score of so worthless a girl, who, he doubted not, but was by this time a common prostitute. This affair made a great noise in town, and it was not without the interposition of all the friends on both sides, that it was made up, by the ***** consenting to ask pardon, and declaring he knew no ill of the young lady, but had spoke prematurely.—The faithful lover, however, was so uneasy at this slur on the reputation of a woman he sincerely believed innocent, that he came to her father, and offered to do his utmost in assisting the search he was then making after her; still declaring, that if she could be found, and would accept his hand, he would ask no other fortune with her, than the happiness of possessing

possessing her. — This generosity so much charmed the old gentleman, that he wished to recover her, not only from principles of tender affection, but chiefly that he may give her hand to a person so extremely deserving. — This it was that had made him now express himself in the terms he did, on hearing the account my uncle gave of her.

In fine, the lover was sent for the next day, to be made partaker of the joyful news; and, after some consultation, it was thought best he should come down with my uncle, and make his addresses in person to the young lady; that her father was not to appear in the affair; but that if she consented, the marriage should be solemnized here. — My uncle is to act as her guardian, and have the management of every thing. This seemed, in all their opinions, the most effectual way of silencing the tongue of censure, on her departing from home in that clandestine manner; since it must appear she went away for no other reason, than to fly from the cruelty of a parent who forced her to receive the addresses of a man she could not love.

Now, dear *Arabella*, you have the whole of this mysterious matter, but you would have pitied the poor creature, if you had seen the agitation she was in, on hearing my uncle's coach was coming up the lane that leads to the house. — She ran to the window, endeavouring to discover, while at a distance, who was with him; but a tall row of thick-set elms, with their intermingling branches, deprived her of the power; and not till they alighted, and were just entering, could she persuade herself it was any other than her father. — It is possible, however, that on
sight

sight of this stranger, who is an extreme handsome well-made man, she might guess part of the truth; for, as she has since confessed to me, he had given her some reasons to imagine he loved her, tho' he had never any opportunity of declaring his passion to herself.

My uncle made no mention of any thing had passed, and matters of meer indifference filled up the conversation all supper-time, till the hour arriving for repose, he saw his guest into a chamber prepared for him, and then returned to give us an account you may believe we were impatient enough to hear. The young lady could not be told the conditions of her pardon depended on her accepting this gentleman for a husband, without blushing excessively; the proofs he had given, however, of his love and generosity, had all the weight they ought to have with her; and I do not doubt but that a very few days courtship will entirely subdue all the scruples her excess of modesty raises, in opposition to the wishes of so ardent and faithful a lover.

WHEN the wedding is over, we shall all go to town together; the bride and bridegroom are to wait on the old gentleman in form, and ask pardon for having married without his privity; after which, the feasting, ball, and every thing proper for celebrating the nuptials of people of their distinction, shall be elegantly furnished out; and you will have the pleasure of seeing *the lady of the cave* shine out with all the advantages of pomp and grandeur: It will also, I flatter myself, add to your satisfaction, that this happy catastrophe is greatly owing to my courage, in pursuing and discovering the *white devil*
of

of Broxbon wood; if it would have so good an effect on you, as to rid you of the fears you are in of ghosts and apparitions, I shall have a double cause of rejoicing, being

Dear Arabella, sincerely yours,

CARICLEA.



EPISTLE XXIII.

*From LUCINDA, to the Lord ***, giving him an account of the reason of her brother's retirement from the world.*

My Lord,

IT is high time you should be undeceived concerning the motives of my brother's retirement from the world; and however improper it may be to rectify the mistakes of others in this point, your lordship is too sincere and experienced a friend to our family to be kept in the dark; nor would I have concealed the cruel secret one moment from you, if I had not waited the opportunity which now presents itself of conveying that to you by a safe and private hand, which I did not care to entrust by the post.

I DOUBT not but your lordship has heard, since it is the common report, that grief for the elopement of a beloved wife, was the sole cause, and that meerly because he is deprived of the sight of her, he is determined to see no body.— I must own there is a great appearance of reason in this conjecture, as he was seized immediately

ately after her departure with that despair, which has robbed us of him, and himself of all the enjoyments of life ;—but, my lord, had she left a husband to whom she had such immense obligations, on any pique, or want of affection to him, I think he would have had too much spirit to have resented it in the manner he has done.—So monstrous an ingratitude must have turned all the softer passions into a vindictive rage, and we should have seen him act the part of a provoked, and justly *incensed husband*, not that of a *whining lover*.—But, alas ! the case is quite otherwise, and that unhappy woman is an object, not of *blame*, but the extremest *pity*.

You know, my lord, that he married her without any other fortune than her beauty and good qualities ; she had, indeed, enough of both to justify his choice ; yet he feared those would not be excuse sufficient to a parent, who he knew had the prospect of allying him to one of the most opulent families in the kingdom, and therefore took all imaginable care to keep what he had done a secret.—But in spite of all his caution, some rumours reaching my father's ear, at a time when he was sick of that distemper which proved his death, he put the question to him in such pressing terms, that he fell on his knees, confessed the truth, entreated his forgiveness, and obtained it, on condition the person for whom he had committed this rash act of disobedience, was tolerably well descended, and had a good reputation, on which my brother hesitated not to name her, confident there could be no objection to either of these articles.

I WAS present at this declaration, and trembled for

for my brother while he was making it: My father, however, received it with less emotions than could have been expected, till being told the name of the lady who was now his daughter, he hastily demanded, of what county, what age, and where he became acquainted with her? all which questions being answered, he turned to the other side of the bed, and cried out, with a vehemence which expressed the utmost agitation, *Oh God! oh God! what have I lived to hear!*—I was terribly alarmed to see this sudden change in him, my brother much more so, and imagining, as he afterwards told me, that somebody had traduced his wife, was beginning to utter something in vindication of her character, when my father stopt him, by saying, *I have nothing to accuse her of;—but leave me, I would be alone.*

AT these words we both went out of the chamber, and sent in the person who attended him, and who had been ordered to withdraw on my brother's entrance.—After this, my brother several times was about to say something on the same subject, but my father still cut him short, and at last forbid him to mention it any more.—Just before his death he called us both to him, gave us his blessing in the most affectionate terms, wishing my brother happy in his marriage, but spoke it with a sigh, and shook his head, in token that he much feared what he desired.

AFTER the melancholly solemnity of his funeral was over, my brother has frequently talked with me concerning his behaviour in this point, but none of us were able to fathom the meaning;—too soon, alas! it is now unhappily explained.—O, would the fatal secret had re-

mained for ever in darkness, two worthy persons had not been involved in the irremedible confusion they now are.

BUT not to keep your lordship in suspense, my sister was sent for last week to her mother, who the messenger brought word was then dying. — She went, but returned not the whole night; my brother went next day to take leave of the old lady, but found her dead. — On asking for his wife, they told him she left the house early in the morning; this could not but surprize him, as she was not come home; but thinking she might possibly be entrusted with some commands from her mother, which required immediate execution, he was not much disturbed, till I was obliged to make him so, by shewing him a letter I received from her some hours after; a copy of which I enclose to your lordship, as it will unravel this mysterious subject. I am,

Your lordship's

Most humble and obedient servant,

LUCINDA.



EPISTEL



EPISTLE XXIV.

[*Enclosed in the foregoing.*]

From MONIMIA to LUCINDA, acquainting her with the sad manner of her mother's death, and the necessity she was under of never seeing her husband more.

Madam,

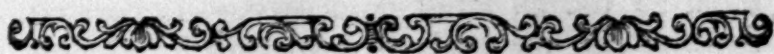
MUST not call you sister, tho' alas !
I I have too much cause to call you doubly so. — But in whatever relation I may be now supposed to stand, I know you have a soul too gentle and too generous to refuse your pity to the miseries to which I am reduced, or your pardon for the involuntary crime I have been guilty of ; — for oh, I have a dreadful secret to impart, a confession of faults not my own, an accusation against a dead, a too indulgent, yet most cruel mother ; which, when you know, you will wonder that I live to tell it ; and would to heaven the sad discovery had at once deprived me of the power. — Doomed to bear all the pangs of sin and shame, yet innocent, unblameable in mind ; — to linger out a life of horrors, banished for ever from all my paradise on earth, and perhaps by my despair, rendered incapable of attaining one hereafter.

O *Lucinda*, I found my unhappy mother in agonies far worse than death ordinarily inflicts. — As soon as I approached, she waved her hand

for all about her to leave the room, and then looking on me with eyes all wild, — Wretched daughter of a most wretched mother, *cried she*, dear does thy birth, thy fatal life, and my more fatal fondness of thee cost me. — But swear, *added she*, swear, while I yet have breath to speak, and ears to hear, never to see thy husband more, — to fly him as a serpent, — never to hold the least communication more, nor even to think of him as thou hast been accustomed. — You will easily believe the confusion I was in, would not suffer me to make any immediate reply to this cruel, and, as it appeared to me, unjust injunction; — till she resumed her discourse in these terms: — He is, *Monimia*, he is, *said she*, your brother. — In my days of youth and vanity, my husband then abroad, his father seduced me to his bed, and you are the offspring of that unlawful flame. — Yet when I saw the incestuous passion kindled between you and the son of your own father, I was so far from attempting to suppress it, that, tempted by the prospect of your greatness, and opulence in the world, I encouraged it in both, and, as you know, hurried you into a private marriage. — Cursed, cursed ambition! *went she on*, to what dreadful lengths will it not transport the mind! — What followed was all distraction and despair; — her breast seemed tortured with unutterable pains, — her mind with yet more unutterable anguish; — her incoherent words, — her starts, — her tremblings, told me more plainly than words could have done, that no beam of hope darted on her departing soul, but all was horror there. — Thus, thus she died: judge, madam, what I, unhappy I, must suffer. — I can no more. — Communicate this to the dear man who was once my husband; I could not

not write to him myself. — When he knows the fatal affinity between us, he will not, he dare not, condemn what, not the commands of a dying parent, but all the principles of religion and morality, and even those of nature itself, enforce me to obey. — I go for ever from him, and from the world. — I hope he will not seek after the place of my retreat; but if he does, I have taken effectual care to prevent its being discovered. — I know his virtue will receive a most grievous shock on the opening this dreadful secret, and believe also, that the loss of a companion he has so much loved, will be no less so. — Be it your care, I beseech you, to alleviate both; but I need not urge that to you, who are so good a *christian*, and a sister. — Adieu, pray for the most forlorn of women,

MONIMIA.



EPISTLE XXV.

From a very young lady, in one of the Canary islands, to her sister in England, whom she had never seen; containing a pressing invitation to her to come over, and describing the beauties of the place, in order to prevail on her.

UST we for ever, my dear sister, converse only at this unhappy distance? — Are we born of the same parents, to be eternal aliens to each other? — I have been told wonders of your wit, ingenuity, and good-nature. — Must strangers, or at least very distant kindred, reap all the benefit of those amiable qualities, while those who are nearest,

and ought, methinks, to be dearest, mourn the want of it.—They say there is a secret sympathy between persons of the same blood, and I am sure I feel it so; how is it then with you?—Have you never any of those longings to see the daughter of your father and your mother, which so powerfully agitate me in my daily musings and my nightly dreams?—If not affection, pity should make you wish to be with a sister, who stands so much in need of your assistance.—You know, my father's many avocations on business suffer him to be seldom with his family;—death has deprived me of my mother, and devotion of my sister; but she forsakes me only to join herself to her creator; you have no such plea: And as you are six years older than myself, and of a much superior understanding, it is in *some degree* your duty to be near me, to correct the errors of my unexperienced youth, and form my mind by the model of your own.—Believe me, I would be most obedient to your instructions, and love the precepts for the teacher's sake.—What can withhold you from coming to a place where your presence is so ardently desired?—What can you find so pleasing in a kingdom rent with internal divisions!—Where father against son, and brother against brother, maintain unnatural contest!—A kingdom, where pride, injustice, luxury, and prophaneness, are almost universal!—A kingdom, sinking by swift degrees into misery and contempt, yet infatuated so far as to doat on the cause of their undoing!—At least this is the account we have of it.—Can this be agreeable to a person of your nice and distinguishing taste?—O, my dearest sister! listen to the dictates of reason, of duty, and of nature, all join to call you from that worse

worse than *Egypt*, into the land of *Canaan*.— Here peace and innocence go hand in hand, and all the graces, all the pleasures wait upon their steps. — No foreign wars, no home-bred jars, no envy, no distrust, disturb the soft serenity of these blissful seats, but all is harmony and love. — Eternal *Zephyrs* watch our morning wakings, bringing ten thousand odours on their wings, and tempt us to the groves from whence they spring. — In troops we wander through the *Jessamin* lanes, or sit in *orange* bowers, where fruits, ripe, and in blossom, charm our smell and taste. — Sometimes on mules we take short journies to *Teneriffe*, and on the foot of that stupendous mount, recline on banks of roses, umbrella'd over with spreading myrtles: — Then change the scene, and view the spacious vineyards, where huge alcoves of clustering grapes hang pendant over our heads: — Sometimes we roam through a long gallery of stately pines, whose loaded boughs present us every kind of fruit in one. — But there is no describing half the various sweets which nature, with a lavish hand, pours on these isles, which justly have the name of *fortunate*; — nor I flatter myself will there be any need of farther arguments, to bring you to us. — My father has just now informed me, that captain * * * carries his positive orders for your coming, and I may now rest in an assured hope of enjoying the happiness I so long, and so earnestly have wished; — yet I am still desirous of more, — I would fain, methinks, imagine if I could, that with your obedience to our father, some little share of love for me may be mingled, and that you will embark with the more readiness, by believing that you shall embrace one

who has so tender an affection for you, and thinks it the greatest blessing to subscribe herself,

My dear, dear sister,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

MARIA THERESA.



EPISTLE XXVI.

URANIA to EUPHROSINE, *on the appearance of a new star in the Firmament.*

My dear EUPHROSINE,

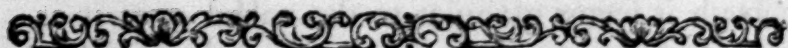
I SHALL certainly turn astronomer in good earnest, and renounce all the dear pleasures of this terrestrial globe, in search of others in the orbs above. — This you will believe when I shall tell you, I have been wholly taken up for several nights past, with admiring a most beautiful appearance in the heavens, and never so much as thought of cards, *Vaux-hall*, or the drawing-room. — This new object of my passion, has the form of a star, but is much larger, rises above an hour before any of them, and obscures all their lustre; — even *Venus* herself looks like an antiquated toast in presence of this new beauty. — Some tell me it is a *comet*, but that seems ridiculous, for I never heard of a *comet* without a tail, and this has none, nor any thing of that fiery aspect I remember to have observed in the phænomena of — 45. — Others cry, it is a star just come, *spick and span*, from the hand of the Creator, and though it now shines with so much radiance, will

will diminish and become faint in time, so as not to be distinguished from its companions; but this supposition I also laugh at; for I never can think that those celestial bodies are capable of fading and growing tarnished like a brocade silk. —A third opinion (for you must know I have been strangely inquisitive) puzzles me yet more: A gentleman of my acquaintance, who has studied these things pretty much, assures me, that though it seems globular to the naked eye, it is not so in reality; and that by the help of a telescope it will be seen semicircular, and to have little points or darts, which shoot forth rays very different from those of an ordinary star. —He adds also, that it made its first appearance in *Italy*, some time in the Year 1720, and was greatly taken notice of, by all the astronomers in those parts: He affirms to have seen it there himself, and is positive, that this, which appears here, is the very same; —for my part I cannot tell what to think of it. —If it be as he says, I would fain know, as it is not a native of our hemisphere, on what embassy it was sent, or whether it comes only on a friendly visit, just to add a new illumination to our circle, and then direct its course to some other. —If *Mira* were in town, I fancy she could satisfy my curiosity in this point: She seems to know the circumference and nature of these starry regions as well as if she had already made the circuit of them, and I would write to her concerning this same star, or whatever it is, but am not enough skilled in longitude and latitude to know whether it is visible or not where she is, and I know too well the value she sets on time to intrude on any part of it with impertinent enquiries.

DEAR *Euphrosine*, if you can give me any new accounts, or confirm me in the belief of either of those I have already heard, it will be acknowledged as a particular favour to her, who is, with the most perfect amity,

Yours,

URANIA.



EPISTLE XXVII.

From EUPHROSINE to URANIA, in answer to the forgoing.

My dear URANIA,

I AM extremely pleased to hear, you find more felicity in contemplating the works of your Creator, than those of your milliner, or mantua-maker: if this new star has no other errand than to take off your attention from the superfluous vanities of this sublunary world, it is certainly a very benevolent aspect to our sex, as your genius, if properly exerted, is furnished with materials, to distinguish you in a most peculiar manner.—Encourage, therefore, in yourself this happy propensity; and, having lifted your eyes above the tinsel grandeur of a birth-day, and the fallacious allurements of the senses, you will also aspire to yet sublimer heights, and from the wonders of the creation, soar to the Almighty Author of these wonders, 'till you can be content with nothing less than infinity itself.

As

As to any other portent this appearance may have, I can give you little satisfaction: the accounts I have received, being not only unintelligible, but also contradictory to each other; —the most knowing affect to make a mystery of their conjectures, and leave the rest of mankind to judge according to their own wishes or imaginations; —all I can say is, that in case it proves an omen of any extraordinary event, if good, it ought to increase our love and adoration of the Divine Bestower, and if evil, acknowledge our transgressions, and arm ourselves with true *christian* fortitude, piety, and resignation.

My father is at present a little indisposed, as soon as it shall please heaven to restore his health, I will wait on you; in the mean time I sincerely wish yours, and a continuance of your present laudable curiosity. Adieu, dear *Urania*,

Yours,

EUPHROSINE.



EPISTLE XXVIII.

From BERENICE to ASTREA, giving her the melancholly account of her sister's death, and the effect which it had on herself.

Madam,



U S T as I was setting out for *Worcestershire*, in order to follow my sister, who you know has been some time there, I received a letter from my aunt, acquainting me, that she was taken ill last Friday

and died two days after.—Yes, that lately so-much-admired, that splendid beauty, is now reduced to a cold lump of clay;—for-ever closed are those once sparkling eyes;—hushed is that voice that gave so much delight;—those limbs, which art was ransacked to adorn, have now no other covering than a simple shroud, and in a few days will be confined within the narrow compass of a tomb.—Ah! what is life!—What all the gaudy pride of youth, of pomp, of grandeur!—What the vain adoration of a flattering world!—Delusive pleasures,—fleeting shadows, how unworthy are you of the attention of a reasonable being!—You know the gay manner in which we have always lived, and will, no doubt, be surprized to find expressions of this kind fall from my pen;—but, my dear *Astrea*, hitherto my life has been a dream; but I am now, thank heaven, awake:—my sister's fate has roused me from my lethargy of mind, made me see the ends for which I was created, and reflect that there is no time to be lost for their accomplishment.—Who can assure me, that in an hour, a moment, I may not be as she is!—And if so, oh! how unfit, how unprepared for an audit at the tribunal of heaven!—In what a strange stupidity have I passed fourteen or fifteen years! (for those of my childhood are not to be reckoned.)—I always knew that death was the portion of mortality, yet never took the least care to arm against the terrors of it.—Whenever I went a little journey, I provided myself with all things necessary, yet have I got nothing ready for that long, last voyage, I must one day take into another world:—What an insatiation to be anxious for the minutest requisites of ease and pleasure, in a dwelling where I proposed to
stay

stay a few weeks or months, perhaps, yet wholly regardless of what was wanting to form my felicity in an eternal situation. Reason, just kindled, shudders at the recollection of that endless train of follies I have been guilty of:—well might the poor *Berinthia* feel all their force;—vain, gay, unthinking as myself, I tremble at the bare imagination of those ideas which her last moments must inspire, for I now faithfully believe with Mr. *Waller*, that,

*Leaving the old, bath worlds at once they view,
Who stand upon the threshold of the new.*

WHETHER it was the suddenness of her fate, or a letter she wrote to me not two hours before her death, I know not, that has thus transported me from one extreme to the other; but of this I am certain, it is the voice of heaven, saying to my soul, *Awake thou that sleepest!* and I can never enough acknowledge the goodness of that Divine Power, without whose interposition it could not have been brought about.

I SHALL make no apology for this epistle, divided between grief and joy, because I am very sensible that whatever concern you may feel for my sister, it will be greatly alleviated, by finding I am become at last a reasonable creature. I enclose you the letter she sent, that you may judge with what kind of sentiments she left this world.—Heaven has, I hope, accepted her contrition, and will enable me, as you find she desires, to be more early in mine. I am,

Dear Madam,

Your most afflicted humble servant,

BERENICE.

EPISTLE



EPISTLE XXIX.

[*Enclosed in the foregoing.*]

BERINTHIA to BERENICE, wrote two hours before her death, to advise her not to defer making the necessary preparations for futurity.

My dear sister,



BEFORE this can possibly reach you, the unchanging fiat will pass, and I shall be either happy or miserable for ever.—None about me pretend to flatter me with the hopes of seeing another morning.—Short space to accomplish the mighty work of eternal salvation!—Yet cannot I leave the world, without admonishing, —without conjuring you to be more early in preparing for that dreadful hour, you are sure not to escape, and know not how shortly it may arrive : — we have had the same sort of education, —have lived in the same manner, and though accounted very like, have resembled each other more in our follies than our faces.—Oh ! what a waste of time have we not both been guilty of ?—To dress well has been our only study, —parade, equipage, and admiration, our ambition ; — pleasure our avocation ; and the mode our god.—How often, alas ! have I prophaned, in idle chat, that Sacred Name, by whose merits alone I have hopes to be forgiven ? How often have I sat and heard his miracles and sufferings ridiculed by the false wits of the age, without feeling uneasy emotions at the blasphemy !—Nay, how often.

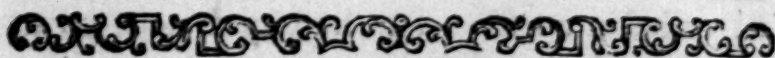
often have I myself, because I heard others do so, called in question that futurity I now go to prove, and am already convinced of?—One moment, methinks, I see the blissful seats of *paradise* unveiled;—I hear ten thousand miriads of miriads of celestial existencies tuning their golden harps to songs of praise, to the Unutterable Name.—The next, a scene all black and gloomy, spreads itself before me, whence issue nought but sobs, and groans, and horrid shrieks.—My fluctuating imagination varies the prospect, and involves me in a sad uncertainty of my eternal doom:—on one hand beckoning angels smile upon me, while on the other the furies stand prepared to seize my fleeting soul.—I dare not hope; nor will the reverend doctor G** suffer me absolutely to despair;—he comforts me with promises in holy writ, which, to my shame, I was unacquainted with before, but now I feel them as balm to my tormented conscience.—Dear, dear *Berenice*, I must bid you eternally adieu! I have discharged my duty in giving you this warning; O! may my death, which you will shortly hear of, give it that weight I wish and pray for:—You are the last object of my earthly cares:—I have now done with all below,—shall retire into myself, and devote the few moments, allowed me, to that penitence which alone can recommend me to a glorious immortality. I die,

Your sincere friend,

And affectionate sister,

BERINTHIA.

EPISTLE



EPISTLE XXX.

From CLIO, to a person of a very base and cruel disposition, who having been thrown down in a crowd, and trampled upon, had his leg broke, which, turning to a mortification, was cut off, and the amputation, together with other hurts he received, judged by the surgeons to be mortal.

*Mr. **,*



YOU have proved yourself so altogether a stranger to the softer emotions of humanity, that having pitied none, you might reasonably expect to be by all unpitied; and, perhaps, will scarce believe me when I say, I am sorry for the unhappy accident has befallen you; yet nothing can be more certain than that I am truly so;—not for your worthless life, which has been of little consequence, unless for the work of mischief; nor for the family you may leave behind; if they follow not the ill example you have given, that power who feeds the ravens, doubtless will take care of them; but my concern is for that immortal part of you, which no offences committed in this world can make me wish should be miserable in the next.

It is not therefore to triumph in your misfortune,—it is not to exult in the justice of divine providence, that I employ my pen, but to admonish, to conjure you to devote whatever time may be yet permitted you, to an impartial examination of your heart, and a just reflection how
little

little those base and inhuman habits you have so much indulged and gloried in, will qualify you for the society of beings, who exercise themselves only in acts of piety and mercy.—I will not call it a *savage*, but a *fiend-like* disposition, to be pleased with, and add to the calamities of others;—that yours has been such, you cannot pretend to deny, and I hope before you launch into eternity, you will be perfectly convinced it requires proper restitution, and a more than ordinary penitence to atone for the evils you have occasioned.

THERE is something so remarkable in your fate, that it seems to me as if inflicted on you by the mercy of heaven, in order to awake your too long sleeping conscience.—View but the cause of your present affliction, consider that providence punished you by those very instruments, with which you intended to oppress others; remember with what a barbarous assiduity you hired a mercenary rabble to insult the distressed of persons every way infinitely your superiors, and whose actions, however criminal they might be deemed, fell not within your province to punish; and at the same time if you reflect how very possible it is, that the mob, by whom you are reduced to this condition, might be partly composed of those wretches employed by your infernal zeal, for the purpose I have mentioned, you cannot surely fail of being touched with that remorse and true contrition, which alone can give you any claim to compassion *here*, or pardon from *above*;—that you may *merit* the *one*, and *obtain* the *other*, is the sincere wish of her, who is the enemy of your *vices*, not of your *person*.

CLIO.

End of the SECOND BOOK.



EPISTLES.

BOOK III.

EPISTLE XXXI.

*From MIRA to EUPHROSINE, with the relation
of an accident which had given her some pain.*

My dear EUPHROSINE,



HERE is no such thing as a continued series of tranquility below; how happy soever our station may be, and how calm and serene soever we are by constitution and temperament, some accident or other to ourselves, or to those for whom we have a regard, will intervene, when we least think on it, to disturb our peace. I have lately met with one of a most uncommon nature, which has given a sensible interruption to the pleasures I should otherwise enjoy in this retirement from the noise and hurry of the world.

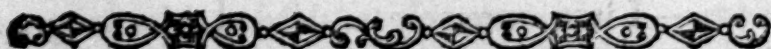
My last informed you, that as I could not have the happiness of your company this summer,
I made

I made it my way to call at the house of a relation, and took his daughter with me:—I had never seen her since an infant, she being bred in *France*, and but lately returned; but I found her a very pretty young creature, well accomplished, and endued with a more than ordinary share of wit and vivacity.—My lord, you know, did not leave *London* till a fortnight after me, and she was all that time, as well as during our journey, a companion perfectly agreeable.—She has a sweet voice, some skill in music, she often sung to me, and told me a thousand diverting stories of occurrences she had either met with, or heard of abroad, nor was she less capable of bearing a part in the most serious conversation. My lord, on his arrival, was no less pleased with her than myself, till all on a sudden her gaiety gave place to reserve, and that reserve to the most gloomy melancholly, and such an absence of mind, as made her at some times seem delirious.—I was extremely troubled at this change, and spared no pains to sift out the occasion, whether of mind or body, but all my endeavours were ineffectual for this purpose, or even to give her any consolation; on the contrary, she rather industriously avoided my tender cares.—At last, she took it in her head to leave me, and go to an uncle, who has a seat about thirty miles distant from mine, and in the most wild, unpleasant part of the whole country:—Nothing I could say was able to engage her stay, and she went in somewhat, I thought, of an abrupt manner.—She had been gone, however, but two days, when she dispatched a man and horse with a letter to me, which I here enclose, to save myself the pains of relating a story not very agreeable in the repetition:—You will here see
fully

fully the motive which occasioned so strange an alteration in her behaviour. — I shall only subjoin, that according to her request, I sent an immediate answer, which, though I am a little disconcerted, is wrote in such terms, as I believe will give her no reason to repent of having made me her confidante.

You will excuse the shortness of this, my concern for that unhappy girl having rendered me, at present, almost incapable of thinking on any thing else. — I need not desire you to keep this foolish affair a secret, for if I were less acquainted with your discretion, and good-nature, I should not have communicated it to you. Adieu, my dear *Euphrosine*, my next, I hope, will be more worth the postage.

Yours,
MIRA.



EPISTLE XXXII.

[*Enclosed in the foregoing.*]

From ISMENA to MIRA, giving her the reasons, why no entreaties had prevailed on her to continue longer in her house.



EASE, O incomparable *Mira*! cease to wonder, that my once gay and lively temper became on a sudden converted into pensiveness, and by degrees into the most gloomy melancholly. — Cease to repent my quitting your house for one which, as you justly said in pressing me to stay, has not the thousandth part of the pleasures yours can afford.

afford.—Alas ! I never knew before, that I was capable of disguising my thoughts, but now find I am the greatest dissembler in the world, or I could not thus long have hid the fatal truth from the penetrating eyes of her who was chiefly concerned in it.—Yes, madam, I have deceived you,—have abused your generous unsuspecting friendship, that friendship which is yet dearer to me than any other earthly good ;—yet was it not a voluntary crime, but forced on me by the severest malice of my fate, and to which you yourself are partly accessory.—Oh ! why did you, with such resistless kindness, persuade me to come with you to that enchanting recess, where every thing conspires to soften the soul, and make it fit for the most tender impressions ?—Why expose my young and too unguarded heart to a sensibility of charms, whose power you had so much experienced in your own ?—Could I resist, where *Mira* had been overcome ?—You may reflect how fond I was of a song of Mr. Addison's, in the opera of *Rosamond*, which will partly reveal the unhappy secret to you : It was this :

*Think on the soft, the tender fires
Which in your own warm bosom rise,
When with languishing eyes
That great, that charming man you see,
Think of yourself, and pity me.*

BUT this was an excuse, which served me only in the infancy of my passion, when all my wishes were bounded in the limits of admiration, and I thought it no offence to virtue, to indulge an affection, which then seemed innocent, for the husband of my friend, and kinswoman :

And

And now you have the whole of my misfortune, —but hate me not for it; —quite new to love, I knew not what it meant, nor the nature of that encroaching flame; —I imagined that I paid my lord no more than his due, on the account of those extraordinary merits, which all who know him allow he is possessed of; and that the warmth of friendship, with which I regarded him, was, because he was your husband; —but oh! when I found, as too soon I did, that I began to love you less, and even to envy you, then, and not till then, my crime appeared in its true colours: —Alarmed, and shocked, I set seriously about examining my own heart, and to what aim the ideas that possessed it, tended. —Reason had not so far abandoned me, as not to shew it, such as, if indulged, would render me a horror even to myself: —The struggles I afterwards endured between virtue, and an irresistible inclination, threw me into that sadness, you with so much goodness endeavoured to alleviate. —I merited indeed your pity, though unworthy of your care, —never was a heart torn with more violent convulsions; —in vain I thought to assuage the fever in my mind with the pure streams of religion: —What antidote could work effect, while every day my eyes and ears drank in new poison; —at length I resolved to go, but what excuse to make for doing so, I knew not; —you were too well acquainted with the affairs of our family, for any pretence of business to be received, and my father had promised I should stay with you the whole summer: —Heaven knows how long I might have continued in this dreadful uncertainty, if an accident had not at once determined me.

I WAS

I WAS one day lying on a bank, in that delightful grot, by the side of a river, which supplies your fountains, in a kind of stupid resvery, when my lord happening to pass that way, and seeing the posture I was in, accosted me with that gallantry and politeness, which is so natural to him ;—I saw him not till he was close to me, and took one of my hands in order to raise me :—But, good God ! I blush even at the reflection of the condition I was then in ;—my heart fluttered in my breast like a bird just caught ;—every limb trembled, and I was for some moments deprived of the power of speaking one word, in answer to the obliging things he said to me on the score of that melancholly he had observed in me ; nor yet do I well know what it was at last I uttered, but am very sure my words were all disjointed, wild, and incoherent as my thoughts ;—such an excess of pleasure and of pain certainly was never felt at once ;—I endeavoured to recover myself, but my efforts were fruitless ; I was wholly incapable of behaving as I ought, or of even knowing how I did behave, when luckily for me, the two little ladies, with their governess, came up to us, one of them running to her too charming father, took his attention from me, and I entertained the other with some idle stuff, till we returned home.

As soon as I had leisure to meditate on this adventure, I was struck with the most poignant shame at the ridiculous part I had acted in it. The most favourable construction my lord could put upon it, I thought, was to imagine I was run mad, or was turned idiot, but neither of these was half so terrible to me as the apprehensions that he saw into the true cause, and that
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the guilty secret of my heart was betrayed to him by the confusion of my behaviour.—This it was which gave my modesty so cruel an alarm, that the very next day I told you, madam, that I would go to my uncle's, that I had heard of some particularities in his family which I was curious to see, and I very well remember returned in a very awkward manner the obliging surprize you were pleased to testify at my indulging any thoughts of leaving you.—With what enchanting sweetness did you attempt to detain me?—I felt all the force of your goodness, and your eloquence, but durst not permit myself to be swayed by it.—I am now in a place, where, except my uncle himself, the rooks that kaw in his woods, are the only intelligible creatures;—but I am justly banished from *Eden*, and the conversation of angels: The penance I suffer is little in comparison to what my folly merits, and however disagreeable the recipe is, that I have prescribed myself, I am not without some hopes it will work a cure of my disease.—I feel my agitations already diminish, since I have began to make you this confession:—I could not rest without doing it, and tho' some people may think you are the last person in the world that ought to have known it, yet I should die with grief and shame were it to be revealed to any other:—The confidence I have in you indeed is great, but no more than I am certain you deserve.—I have seen, in a thousand instances, that superiority of soul which *Juba* ascribes to *Marcia*:

The virtuous Mira tow'rs above her sex!

True, she is fair, O most divinely fair!

But then the lovely dame improves her charms

Wub

*With unaffected wisdom, flowing goodness,
And sanctity of manners. —*

I flatter myself that time, absence, and a due recollection, will banish this frenzy entirely from my thoughts, and then I may boast some sort of title to your forgiveness; till when, I must not even wish to appear before you: — If you would favour me with a line, to strengthen me in the pious resolution I have taken to center my whole love and wishes in the divine source of all perfection, it would be the highest act of charity and compassion to, madam,

Your unfortunate kinswoman

And most obliged humble servant,

ISMENA.



EPISTLE XXXIII.

From SOPHRONIA to her daughter of twelve years old, then under the care of her grandmother, in the country.

My dear child,

THOUGH I know you want no precepts under my mother's care, to instruct you in all moral and religious duties, yet there are some things she may possibly forget to remind you of, which are highly necessary for the forming your mind, so as to make a considerable and distinguished figure in the world: — I am certain you will be instructed in music, singing, and dancing, by the

best masters the country affords; and need not doubt, but you will very often be told, that good housewifry is a most commendable quality.—I would have you indeed neglect none of these branches of education; but, my dear, I should be grieved to hear you were so much attached to them, as not to be able to devote two hours, at least, every day to reading.—My father left a collection of very excellent books in all languages behind him, which are yet in being, and as you are tollerably acquainted with the *French* and *Italian*, I would not have you be a stranger to their best authors. *Poetry*, if it be good, (as in that library you will find none other) very much elevates the Ideas, and harmonizes the soul, and well wrote *novels* are an amusement, in which sometimes you may indulge yourself; but *history* is what I would chiefly recommend;—without some knowledge of this, you will be accounted at best but an agreeable trifier:—I would have you gay, lively, and entertaining; but then I would have you able to *improve*, as well as *divert*, the company you may happen to fall into.

BUT, my dear child, I must warn you to beware with what disposition you sit down to read books of this nature; for if you lightly skim them over, and merely to gratify your curiosity with the amazing events delivered in them, the research will afford you little advantage:—You must, therefore, consider what you read;—mark well the chain of events which bring on any great catastrophe, and this will shew you that nothing happens by chance, but that all is entirely governed by the direction of an over-ruling power:—In distinguishing the true causes of the

rise

rise and fall of empires, and those strange revolutions that have happened in most kingdoms of the world; you will admire divine justice, and be far from accusing providence of partiality, when you find, as frequently you will, the good dethroned, all rights both human and divine sacrilegiously trampled upon, a mock authority established in the place of a real one, and lawless usurpation prosper; because at the same time you will see that this does not happen till a people, grown bold in iniquity, and ripe for destruction, have drawn down upon themselves the severest vengeance of offended heaven, which is tyranny and oppression; and though innocent individuals may suffer in the general calamity, yet it is for the good of the whole, in order to bring them to a just sense of their transgressions, and turn them from their evil ways:—This the historical part of the bible makes manifest in numberless instances; and this, the calamities which at different times have befallen every kingdom and commonwealth, evidently confirm.

I AM the more particular in giving you these cautions, because, without observing them, you may be liable to imbibe prejudices which will pervert your judgment. As you regard therefore my commands, which will always be for your improvement, never be remiss in this point, that you may form to yourself a proper moral from what you read.

NEXT to history, I should be glad to see you have some knowledge in natural philosophy:—You have already read several little treatises in that agreeable science, and you may be furnished with more and better where you are;—the same

person that brings you those necessaries you desired me to send, will also deliver to you glasses of various kinds, by the help of which you may discover plainly the form of many insects, which to the naked eye appear but so many moving motes:—Believe me, child, the wide creation presents nothing that affords not infinite matter for delightful speculations; and the more you examine the works of nature, the more you will learn to love and adore the Great God of nature, the fountain of every perfection.

I expect your next will not be filled with enquiries after new fashions, or with directions to your milliner; nor shall I be better satisfied with an account of your having begun, or finished, such or such a piece of fine work: Let this inform you, that it is in other kinds of learning I would have you versed:—I flatter myself with seeing my commands obeyed, and that no part of what I have said will be lost. A little more time and knowledge of the world will shew you the value of it, and prove to you, more than any indulgence I could treat you with, how very much I am

Your affectionate mother,

SOPHRONIA,



EPISTLE



EPISTLE XXXIV.

From a lady in Paris, to another in London, giving her the narrative of a very odd adventure she was witness to at the initiation of a nun.

My dear MIRANDA,

I AM sorry to find by yours, that you imagine the short time I have been in France has made me cease to be an English woman, or that any attachments here can make me forget the more natural ones I have to the country which gave me birth: — I can do justice to the pleasures of this place, without loving them beyond those I have found at home, and am not so enchanted with the magnificence of *Versailles* or *Fontainbleau*, as not sometimes to wish myself with you, wandering in the delightful shades of dear *Windfor* forest. — That curiosity, however, which brought me hither, inclines me to stay till I have seen every thing worthy the observation of a traveller, and should be glad to atone for that absence you so kindly regret, by faithfully communicating to you all the occurrences which my situation makes me acquainted with, — such of them at least, as appear to me to have any claim to your attention.

I KNOW nothing mortifies me more, than that it is not in my power to give you any account of that noble stranger, of whom you are so desirous to hear. — I have never yet been able to get the

least glympse of him ; he has, it seems of late, kept himself extremely retired, never goes to court, nor to any other public place.—All his amusements,—his very devotions are confined within the walls of the castle, where he at present resides, and to which I need not tell you many reasons forbid me to go, in case I might be admitted.—I protest to you I have asked questions enough concerning him, to make me pass for either a very *designing*, or a very *impertinent* woman ; yet all my enquiries amount to just nothing.—I cannot dive into the cause of this reserve, but I find every one affects a great caution in speaking of him.—I expected to hear some particulars of his *vices* from the lovers of scandal, but they pretend not to have discovered any in him, and I have perceived that the *French* in general, even those among them who are the greatest admirers of *virtue*, speak but sparingly of the amiable qualities of a person not born among them ; so that it will be a kind of miracle if ever I get his character at full ; —at present I can say no more of him than what you have heard, a thousand times over, from people who perhaps know as little of him as myself.—Instead therefore of the detail I could have wished to give you, you must for this time content yourself with that of an adventure, which, I believe, you will think as odd a one as any you ever met with in romance ; but I can assure you, from the testimony of my own eyes, it is a fact which happened but a few days past.

It is the mis-called policy, and I think cruel custom of this country, that when a person of condition has a greater number of daughters than his fortune will allow him to portion off according

ing to their rank, he forces the younger, or the least favourite, into a convent, rather than suffer the dignity of his family to be demeaned by an ignoble marriage.—By the laws of the church, it is true, no woman can be compelled to take the veil; and, after the year of probation, the question is always asked in the most solemn manner by the bishop; but when once a poor young creature is carried within those fatal walls, there are so many insinuations on the one side, from the abbess and sisterhood, and so many threats on the other, from the parents and kindred, that few have had the courage to testify their dislike.

ONE of these intended victims to pride and ostentation, I happened to be acquainted with at the grate of the *Augustin* monastery, behind which she frequently appeared with some of the nuns, to whom I had been introduced. She was extremely pretty, and her age did not exceed seventeen, but she had an air of dejection in her face, which shewed how little she was satisfied with the lot assigned her.—She had, it seems, besides a natural aversion to a monastic life, the most tender attachment to this world:—She loved a young gentleman, by whom, as the sequel will prove, she was no less ardently beloved.—The story of their mutual passion was no secret.—I heard it from as many as had the least acquaintance with either of them, and every one compassionated the cruel and eternal separation which must shortly be between them.

BUT of what service is pity, without the power of helping.—The parents of the young lady were inexorable.—Her year of noviceship was now expired, and the fatal day appointed to tear

her for ever from all her hopes, and every enjoyment of life and love.

As I had never seen the ceremony of initiation, and had been told much of it, I was very desirous of being present at this, and no sooner gave a hint of my inclination, than a gentleman and his lady, from whom I have received many signal favours since my arrival, offered to accompany and place me where no part of the solemnity should escape my sight.

ACCORDINGLY we went, and had not long attended, before we saw the intended nun appear, led between her father and another grave old gentleman, who was the next of kin, and followed by a vast number of both sexes.—She was habited extremely rich;—her head, stomacher, and the borders of her gown, sparkled with jewels, and seemed rather the magnificence of a bride, than one who was going to be secluded for ever from the world; but my obliging guides informed me this was always the custom, but that the instant of her admission, she would be disrobed of all this state.

THE splendor in which she appeared, on so sad an occasion, put me in mind of those beautiful lines Mr. *Phillips* has put into the mouth of *Andromache*:

*Thus the gay victim, with fresh garlands crown'd,
Pleas'd with the sacred rite's enliv'ning sound,
Through gazing crowds, in solemn state, proceeds;
And, dress'd in fatal pomp, magnificently bleeds.*

FOR

FOR I must own, that without any of these tender emotions she was possessed of, I look on a monastic life as a total privation of all the purposes of our being.—Our talents were designed for action, and are not only relative to our own wants, but to the good of social life. Each individual is, in some sense, related to the community in general, as each member is to the body; their mutual good offices constitute the public welfare.—It is, therefore, a species of murder to inclose, within the prison of monastic walls, a life which might have been valuable to society; for whoever enters into it, is, in a natural sense, as effectually buried, as if repositied in the *land where all things are forgotten.*

BUT as by what I had been told of her, I thought I had reason to guess at the situation of her heart, I was beyond measure surprized to find, instead of that distraction, that melancholly gloom I expected in her countenance, a look more lively than I had ever seen her put on.—Her pace indeed was even, and composed, befitting the solemnity of the procession, but her eyes darted the most spirituous rays, while she continually turned her head from side to side, as willing no one of that numerous assembly should be unnoticed by her.—The short reflection I had time to make on her behaviour, rendered me incapable of believing her heart was engaged, at least so deeply, as had been represented to me; for it did not enter into my head, that a person of her years, and so extravagantly in love, could have either real fortitude enough to make the cruel sacrifice she was about to do, without the greatest and most visible emotions, or artifice enough to disguise the anguish of her soul, were it, in any

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measure,

measure, proportionable to what the world imagined.

As I had been told the form observed in admitting a young nun, I was not a little impatient to see how she would go thro' this last scene of her part ; I doubt not but you are equally so, and I will not keep you in suspense ; — she knocked at the gate of the convent, with the intrepidity she had approached it : — the bishop appeared, and asked what was her demand ? to which, it seems, she should have answered, *To be admitted within these sacred walls, and that heaven will accept my vows of everlasting chastity.* — But, my dear *Miranda*, she had prepared a speech of a far different nature, and putting one knee to the earth, and at the same time taking hold of the hand of a well-made agreeable young gentleman, who had pressed through the crowd 'till he got close to her, *My lord*, said she, *I demand this gentleman for my husband, to whom I have long since been engaged by the most solemn promises, and from whom death only shall divide me.*

NEVER was any consternation greater, than that which appeared in the faces of all present. — The bishop frowned ; — the father of the young lady, and some others of her kindred, endeavoured to force her from her lover ; but their hands were too closely locked to be easily unrivettted, and six or seven gentlemen, who 'till now had seemed disinterested spectators of the shew, but were in the plot, came that instant up, and each laying his hand on his sword, said, If perswasion was ineffectual, they were prepared to do justice to their friend, who was betrothed to the lady they would compel to be a nun.

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ON this, the bishop took the old gentleman aside, and, as I have been since informed, remonstrated to him, that as no convent either would, or could, according to the orders of the church, pretend to receive her after this public declaration of her pre-engagement, the most prudent way would be to give his consent to what would doubtless be consummated without it, perhaps, in a less honourable way.—The rest of the kindred were afterwards consulted, and after a short whisper among themselves, they turned to the young lady, who was now encircled by the friends of her lover; and the father said, that though she had taken a step so contrary to his intentions, and the duty she owed him, yet he would no longer oppose her inclinations.—On which, the same bishop, who was to have received her vows of celibacy, performed the ceremony of her nuptials, to the infinite satisfaction of the whole assembly, who loudly expressed their approbation of the conduct both had shewn, and doubted whether the courage of the bride, or the constancy and ingenuity of the bridegroom, were most to be commended.—For my part, as little compassion as you think I have for the woes of love, I was so much affected with those she had laboured under, that I was infinitely rejoiced to see so happy a period put to them.

AND now, my dear *Miranda*, I shall conclude this tedious epistle; with assuring you, that wherever I am, I shall always be, with the most perfect amity,

Yours, &c.

PANTHEA.



EPISTLE XXXV.

From Mira to a lady who had desired to know her opinion concerning the influence which some people impute to eclipses.

Madam,



THE little I am able to say on the subject you propose, will rather shew my readiness to oblige you, than afford any satisfaction to your curiosity.—I know, and it is obvious to the most ordinary understanding, that what we call an eclipse of the sun, is no more than when we are deprived of his rays by the interposition of an opaque body ;—that glorious luminary being in itself the same, at that time, as when we behold its greatest lustre :—That such deprivations are frequent in one part of the globe or other, and that they are always foretold, even by the common almanack-makers, shews that there is nothing supernatural in them.—I speak not of that miraculous phænomena at the crucifixion of our Blessed Saviour, which, however, *Toland*, *Woolaston*, and some other moderns, have impiously attempted to prove it no more than common, was far different from all that had ever before appeared, or perhaps ever will 'till the last tremendous day.—The sun did then, indeed, lose its light,—the darkness was total, and universal, and not confined to particular regions or parts of the earth.—*Dennis the Areopagite*, the greatest philosopher and mathematician of his time, being then in *Egypt*, thought it

so much beyond nature, that he cried out in the utmost astonishment, *Either the God of nature suffers, or the whole fabrick of the world is about to be dissolved!*

As to any other eclipses, it is certain they afford no matter of surprize; but I can see no reason, because we can account for and foresee those revolutions in the celestial bodies, why we should deny the effect they may be supposed to have over human affairs.—Has the sun less influence in calling forth the latent seeds to sprout in so many beautiful plants and flowers in the spring season, because we know he is then just entering into the first point of the equinoctial sign *Aries*?—Are the ebbings and flowings of the sea less regular, since we have discovered they were under the dominion of the moon; or does that friendly planet shine more dim upon us, for our being acquainted with the means by which she receives her light? Many things, which in the first ages of the world were hid from mankind, are now revealed and explained, yet still they retain the qualities bestowed on them at the creation, nor can all our knowledge of the *cause* destroy the *effect*.

In the infancy of science, every thing was astonishing, and *eclipses*, especially when the defection was total, made very great and alarming impressions on the minds of those people, where they happened to be most conspicuous.—This put the philosophers upon enquiring into the nature of the heavens, more diligently than they had done; but their researches gave very imperfect ideas, till *astronomy* came in to their relief.—The adepts in this science, by their observation

tion of the stars, their several revolutions, their conjunctions, oppositions, &c. became able to foretell the time, in which any eclipse would happen;—the length of its duration, and in what part of the world it would be visible:—*Astrology* went yet farther, and pretended to predict not only what weather, but also what events these defections would produce in those places under the sign in which they happened.—I know this science is of latter ages much decryed. A *French* author took the pains to write a very large treatise to prove the absurdity and fallacy of it; and another learned man of our own nation tells us, that *nothing can be more ridiculous, than to ascribe to the influence of the stars, such things as depend wholly upon the will of man*;—but I must beg his pardon when I say, that there is nothing convincing to me in this argument, because if the stars have any manner of influence over the dispositions and propensities of man, that very *will*, which he lays so great a stress upon, is certainly the effect of it.—There are, however, great numbers who absolutely deny this supposition, and will tell you, that by ascribing so much power to the *creature*, we rob the *Creator* of his due; but though this is the best excuse can be given for their obstinacy, yet it seems to me to be dictated by a mistaken zeal.—I can see nothing of impiety in believing that the Almighty, in forming this vast universe, ordained it so that every part should have some kind of connection with the whole; and all, endued with a secret force of impelling and drawing each other as so many links in a chain, preserve that order and exact œconomy which is in the system of nature. This is no more than what the learned call second causes, and I think

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it so far from derogating from the Divine Architect, that it rather enlarges our ideas of his power, wisdom, and goodness. Nature and her productions are the works of God, as Mr. Pope elegantly expresses it :

*All nature is but art, unknown to thee ;
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see ;
All discord, harmony, not understood ;
All partial evil, universal good ;
And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, whatever is, is right.*

It is not to be wondered at, that in an age where it is so much the fashion to *doubt* of every thing, and almost to *deny* every thing, the stars should be held in very little estimation ; but those who really allow their influence, who by the way are more than have courage to acknowledge they do so, must certainly consider those conjunctions, which occasion eclipses, as productive of more than ordinary consequences ; and for this I have the opinion of most historians and physicians, the former of whom are always particularly careful in making mention of them, and remarking on the events which ensued ; and the latter, make no scruple to assure us, that when these eclipses are of any long duration, the air is very unwholesome : They look upon the sun as the nurse of nature, his light and heat giving a new life to every thing below : *If, say they, the animal spirits are obstructed by any cold humour, all the parts of the body suffer ; and in the same manner, mankind is affected, when the moon hinders the sun from shedding his influence upon us.*

NEVERTHELESS, when any discourse of eclipses

eclipses comes upon the carpet, you will hear the generality of people cry out, *they proceed from a natural cause, and cannot be attended with any consequence either good or bad.*—I must confess the stupidity of this inference sometimes tries my patience: Thunders, lightnings, violent storms of hail, rain, and wind, and earthquakes, which sometimes tear the very rocks asunder, all proceed from natural causes; yet who is presumptuous enough to deny the mischiefs they frequently are the occasion of?—Does not common experience inform us, that even the clouds, when so thick as to hinder the rays of the sun from enlivening us, cause an air which every constitution is not robust enough to bear up under?—How much more pernicious then must it be when a compact body, such as the moon, totally deprives us of those salutary rays.

I AM therefore sufficiently warranted to think eclipses prejudicial to our health; what effect they may have over the minds of men, so as to occasion wars, treasons, rebellions, or revolutions in kingdoms, I will not pretend to determine even in my own mind, though I could bring many instances, both from sacred and profane history, as well as from the experience of later ages, to testify they have been the forerunners of such events; but at the same time I am of opinion that to predict and represent them as infallible, is going too great a length; and besides the presumption of diving into the secret decrees of heaven, is cruel to mankind in anticipating in idea those evils which all our knowledge of, would not be able to prevent.—The admirable *Cowley* was certainly of this mind, or he would not have said,

*In whatsoever character
 The book of fate is writ,
 'Tis well we understand not it :
 We should grow mad with too much learning there.
 Upon the brink of every ill we did foresee,
 Undecently and foolishly,
 We should stand shiv'ring, and but slowly venture
 The fatal flood to enter :
 Since willing or unwilling we must do it,
 They feel least cold and pain who're plung'd at once
 into it.*

LET us then chearfully submit in all things to the will of that Supreme Being, who knows what is best for us,—a true understanding of our duty, is the most profitable science, and will render us most acceptable to God, and to society.—Though this is an admonition I am sensible you stand in as little need of as any one in a state of mortality can do, yet I flatter myself will not be ill received from, madam,

Your real friend and humble servant,

MIRA.

P. S. As truth is the object of our enquiries on this and every other subject, I must not conceal from you the sentiments of a friend who differs from me. After reading my letter, he said, I think there is great superstition in supposing that an eclipse of the sun is dangerous to the health, and may probably be a prognostic of evils.—Pray recollect, that the sun is hid from us all night: This is a total and a much longer eclipse, and therefore must be productive of more numerous evils to the health of mankind, if that hypothesis were true.
 Surely

Surely the great lesson to be learned from natural eclipses, is the regularity and order of the heavenly system, and the several degrees of superiority they move in, tho' they seem fixed as in one azure field.—This teaches us humility and adoration.—Thus we differ; but you may judge for yourself.



EPISTLE XXXVI.

From ZIMENA to BELLIZA, giving her an account how much she had been embarrassed with the amour of a young lady of quality.

Dear madam,



O longer honour me with any good opinion of my understanding or conduct;—I have forfeited all the character I ever had of either.—My foolish compassion has hurried me into an action so inconsiderate, and indeed so inconsistent with my former ones, that I cannot help looking on it, as enforced by something supernatural:—Sure at that time my guardian angel slept, and some envious dæmon watched the luckless hour to blast my fame, and turn my boasted caution into contempt.

You may remember I went out of town some time before you left *London*, without taking leave of you, or any body; stayed about three weeks, and at my return made an excuse, which, tho' frivolous enough, you and other of my friends had the goodness to accept. *Florimel* went with me, but the world little imagined on what account,

count, nor would scarce ever have been informed, had not her own imprudence and wickedness proclaimed her infamy. — I need not tell you I had a great affection for her; — there was somewhat I thought artless and innocent in her manner, which very much attached me to her. — Heavens! how must I blush at the remembrance of that warmth, with which I have defended her character whenever I heard it called in question; yet ought I to take much less shame to myself for what I have *said*, than what I have *done* on her account, as you will perceive, when made acquainted with the whole shocking adventure.

I WAS one morning at my toylet, when this unhappy creature came in: — Grief and confusion in her looks, — distraction in her words. — She threw herself into an easy chair, and told me she had a secret to communicate, on which I made a sign to my woman, who being withdrawn, *O Zimene, if ever you had any friendship for me, cried this wretched girl, now is the time to prove it. — Without your assistance I am undone, — ruined for ever. — Will you have pity on me,* continued she, *in the most terrible exigence that ever was?* — I was strangely surprized, as you may believe, not being able to guess what kind of misfortunes, a young maid of quality, like her, could labour under, but replied that she might depend on every thing in my power. — She then told me without farther prelude, that she had been in love with a domestic in the family, from the time she knew what the word love implied; — that she had sacrificed her honour to her passion, was with child, and the time of her pregnancy near expired. Shocked as I was at this
con-

confession, the tears which accompanied it worked strongly on my heart.—The agony I saw her in, prevented my reproaches, and I was able to utter no more than to ask what she imagined I could do for her. *All, all*, cried she eagerly, *that is requisite to preserve my reputation, my peace of mind, nay and my life too*, added she; *for if you grant not the request I have to make, I am determined to put an end to my being this very day.*

I WAS so terrified at these words, and the resolute manner in which she spoke them, that I assured her I would refuse nothing she could desire. On which she informed me, that she had provided a place, and all things necessary for her lying-in, but had no pretence for leaving her father's house, much less for continuing out of it the time her condition would require; therefore conjured me, by my humanity and friendship, to ask my lord's permission to let her go with me as to visit some relation in the country, which request, she added, he would infallibly grant, as he had the highest opinion of my virtue and discretion.—I could not think of embarking thus far in so shameful an affair without a good deal of reluctance; but what shall I say? I saw she must be exposed, or what is much worse, fall a victim to the most horrid despair; I had promised; and all together prevailed upon me.—No time was to be lost, I went directly to entreat his lordship in the manner she had desired, he readily assented, and the very next day I went with her to a little lodging she had hired in an obscure part of the town, pretending to my family that I was going out of town on an extraordinary occasion, and should have no need of taking any attendants with me.

WE

WE had passed but three days in this wretched habitation, before *Florimel* brought a daughter into the world, but the drugs she had taken first in order to cause an abortion, and the extraordinary methods used afterwards, for concealing her condition, had destroyed the infant, as the people about us said, some time before its birth.

THE only satisfaction I had during the time I was thus shut up, was the assurances she was continually giving me of a perfect contrition for the fault she had been guilty of; which indeed had so much the shew of sincerity, that I regretted not what I had done for her. In little more than three weeks she found herself well enough to appear again in the world, — we quit-
ted our concealment, I accompanied her home, thanked her father for the favour he had done in allowing me her company, and no person I believe had even the most distant suspicion of what had happened; she had managed artfully enough I own, for not even the persons where we had been, nor those who assisted at her delivery, had the least knowledge of her name or quality.

BUT now, dear madam, comes the most monstrous part of the narrative: — could she have suppressed her vicious flame, as she had promised and sworn to do, the guilty secret might never have been divulged; but alas! she was grown bold in sin, and wholly regardless of all that is dear to honour. *Belinda* came yesterday to visit me, told me she had been at my Lord * * 's, that all things there were in the utmost confusion, *Florimel* had been surprized in bed with one of the footmen, at a mean house where they passed for persons privately married; that her
father

father himself was brought to be a witness of her shame, and on examining into the affair was told, that she had lain in there, mentioned the time, and described the friend that was with her. — When the malicious flirt came to this circumstance, *I could not have suspected*, said she, with a sneer, *that a lady of Zimene's prudence would have been aiding to a concealment of this nature.* — I know not what reply I made, for I was in too much distraction to remember either what I said or did; — in short the thing is known among all our acquaintance, every one puts their own construction on the part I have acted in it, and there are so few inclinable to think the best, that I despair escaping the severest censures. — My Lord ***, I am certain, will never forgive the imposition I put upon him, and possibly may aggravate my fault in order to make that of his daughter seem less. — All the consolation I have is a consciousness of having meant well, and the hope of being not entirely lost to the good opinion of a lady, the continuance of whose friendship will hinder any other misfortune from taking too deep a root in, madam,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

ZIMENE.



EPISTLE



EPISTLE XXXVII.

From the same to BELLIZA, with the sequel of the story mentioned in the former.

Dear madam,

HAVING troubled you with a recital of my vexations, it is but just I should make you partaker also of the satisfaction I feel in being eased of them. — My Lord * * * is certainly one of the best men upon earth, and as his penetration made him presently see into the true motives of my behaviour, so his generosity prevented him from giving it any other colours than such as in reality it deserved. — He came to me the very day I wrote to you, and instead of the reproaches I expected, accosted me with an air full of good-nature and respect, thanked me in the most obliging terms for the endeavours I had used for preserving the honour of his family, which, though rendered fruitless by the dissolute inclinations of an abandoned girl, he should always remember with the utmost gratitude, and said so many fine things on my humanity, that I had courage enough to relate the manner in which she came to me, and the despair which had engaged me to act in the manner I had done. — But this only gave him an opportunity of exerting his eloquence in new praises, so that I was obliged to silence; and after he had assured me he would vindicate my character to as many as should know of this unhappy affair, he entreated I would advise him
how

how to dispose of this wretched creature, whom, he said, he could not think of keeping with him, not only as her presence would be a continual memento of the disgrace she had already brought upon him, but also as he found her temper too obstinate and irreclaimable to assure himself she might not hereafter be the occasion of yet more. —I would fain have declined complying with his lordship's request in this point, but he so absolutely insisted on my giving my opinion, that after hearing him propose either securing her in a madhouse, or sending her abroad into the plantations, I ventured to discover my disapprobation of either of these measures, as too cruel, and also ineffectual; for as an extravagance of passion had been the cause of her ruin, that passion would probably inspire her with the means of breaking through all restraints for its gratification; and then told him, that if it were true, as I had heard from her, that the fellow was tolerably well descended, and was well brought up, though the misfortunes of his parents had reduced him to get his bread in service, I should think the only way to defend the young lady from incurring any future infamy, was to give the sanction of marriage to their mutual affection. —Finding he started at the word marriage, I remonstrated to him that after what had passed, there was scarce a possibility of marrying her according to her birth; and if even such a thing could be brought about, nothing could be more likely than that she would still continue an intimacy with this first object of her love; that the consequences of such interviews might be fatal in this world, besides incurring the danger of everlasting perdition in the next; —then proceeded to remind him that love was an involuntary passion,

sion, and as her's was fixed on him, and his on her, they would be happier with each other in a mean state, than either could be in all the pomp of grandeur if separated.—After I had urged all I could, in excuse for this offending pair, I offered to his consideration, to bestow a sum of money on them, and let them go to *Holland*, or what part of the world should be judged most convenient for traffic, and try the industry and ingenuity of the young man in acquiring a fortune to supply the deficiencies of his birth.

His lordship listened attentively to all I said on this score, and I could perceive it had made some impression on him; on which I repeated and enforced every argument I had made use of, till, in fine, I gained his consent, on this condition that I would take the whole affair upon myself, see them married, and give them a thousand pounds, which he would deposit in my hands for their use.—To this I readily agreeing, every thing was immediately ordered for the execution of our scheme; *Florimel* was sent that night to my house; and her lover discharged from the confinement he had been in since the detection of his crime, was told he might come also.—I talked to them in what I thought a proper manner:—I represented to her, besides the sin and infamy of derogating from the rules of virtue, the meanness of her choice, and to him the presumption of violating the honour of a lady, whom he ought not even to have thought on but with extreme reverence:—Both seemed to hear me with a becoming shame, but when I informed them of the concessions I had obtained in their favour, all words would be imperfect to describe the transports they expressed,—the young

man cried out, that his lordship equalled heaven in goodness, and added that he had a distant relation at *Rotterdam* who was a merchant, and would instruct him in the ways of commerce, and that he did not doubt but to improve his thousand pounds in such a manner, as to shew he had talents superior to his station.

BUT not to detain your attention, I sent to the commons for a licence, and early the next morning myself and a lawyer, who does all my business, accompanied them to *St. Brides*, where the nuptial ceremony was performed.—The same person enquired for a ship, and saw them embark, having first given them the sum I mentioned in bank bills.

THIS unpromising affair so happily terminated, I think, has a right to demand the congratulations of my friends; but I assure you it is in my power to receive them on a different score:—My lord ***, is so much charmed with the good-nature, wit, and address, as he is pleased to say, I have shewn in his daughter's concerns, that joined with the liking he pretends to have always had of my person, has engaged him to make an offer of his hand, and is as assiduous, as a lover of one-and-twenty, to prevail on me to accept it.—I must own I have esteem and respect for his lordship,—his good qualities exact it from all the world, and from me in particular;—but you know there is a wide difference between respect and love; however I will make no rash vow, *pro* or *con*. If the *one* should happen to be the consequence of the other, it is probable you may see me lady ***. If so, I
beg

beg you will believe my dignity shall never make
me less than I am at present, dear madam,

Your most obedient servant,

ZIMENE.



EPISTLE XXXVIII.

*From ASTREA to a very worthy gentleman under
great misfortunes, and obliged to take shelter in a
foreign realm where he was ill-treated.*

Sir,

Could not omit taking this first opportunity of testifying how deep a sense I have of your misfortunes, but shall offer nothing by way of consolation.—You have too much fortitude and philosophy to stand in need of it; but I am sorry to hear you have fresh occasions of exerting that nobleness of soul; and that perfidy and injustice reign through every climate. It may seem strange that fortune, changeable as she is represented, is generally pretty constant in persecuting merit; but however some people may accuse Providence of partiality in this point, and prophanely cry out with the poet,

*Be juster, Heaven; such virtue punish'd thus,
Will make us think that chance rules all above,
And shuffles, with a random hand, the lots
Which man is forc'd to draw.——*

WE see not the ends which the wise disposer of the universe has in his wise dispensations. He is doubtless just and good in all his decrees,

and when we consider that true greatness of mind shines brightest in adversity, and that nothing so much magnifies the *hero* and the *christian*, as rising superior to *afflictions*, we shall not be surprized to find the *one* inflicted in order to render the *other* *more* conspicuous. — Your enemies confess you have talents to give a double lustre to *prosperity*, and it is the hope of your friends, who are all the honest and disinterested, that you will yet have an opportunity of exerting them. — That your affairs may take this happy turn is sincerely wished, and ardently prayed for, not only for your own sake, but for that of numbers whom your example might reform, by her, who has the honour to be, with the highest respect and veneration, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

ASTREA.



EPISTLE XXXIX.

From ALINDA to EUPHROSINE, on bigotry.

My dear EUPHROSINE,

WHATEVER accident prevented you from coming yesterday, as you were expected, to lady Betty's, it was certainly the contrivance of your better genii, to save you a mortification the less fortunate of your friends had not the power of avoiding.

GAY as you think me, and as indeed I am by nature, I cannot always, with *Democritus*, laugh at the follies of the world. — It gives me a
sensible

sensible concern when I see persons of unquestionable understanding in other things, suffer themselves to be transported by their prejudice in some one particular point, so as to lay aside all reason, to be deaf to all argument, and even forgetful of what is owing to decency and good manners; but I have the least patience when I hear people in matters of religion take upon them to censure, and even pronounce the censure of everlasting perdition, on every one who does not happen to be of the same opinion with themselves, who pretend to give laws to the Almighty, and, as Mr. Pope says,

*Snatch from his arm the thunder and the rod.
Rejudge his judgments, be the god of God!*

I NEVER saw her ladyship have a more numerous assembly,—the conversation was agreeable enough till unluckily it turned on religion, when in a moment, those whom I had never suspected of having any at all, began to extol some one, some another way of divine worship, and exclaim against every thing that dissented from it with a virulence, which I thought little becoming that sacred topic.—Three parts in four of the company durst not open their mouths among these angry zealots, so they had the whole discourse to themselves, which lasted from six o'clock till near nine, and perhaps had not been broke off so soon, if not happily interrupted by the sudden coming in of the Earl of ****, at sight of whom I could see the pretended saints of each different persuasion recollect themselves, and endeavour to compose their ruffled countenances, as if their looking agreeable in his lordship's eyes was a matter of more consequence

than that they had been with such indecent warmth defending.

INDEED, my dear, it is my opinion, that those who place so much merit in the *ceremony*, have little of the *spirit* of religion in their hearts. — They go to the *protestant* church, the *popish* mass-house, or *presbyterian* conventicle, because they have been accustomed to it as the religion of their family, and for the same reason might have gone to the *Jew's* synagogue, for aught either they or I know. Mr. *Dryden* was certainly very much in the right when he wrote these lines,

*By education most have been misled,
So they believe, because they so were bred :
The priest continues what the nurse began,
And thus the child imposes on the man.*

TRUE devotion, in my mind, is quite another thing. — It inspires sentiments and a behaviour widely different ; — the heart is the true temple of the Deity, and if that be pure and well prepared, we have no room to doubt whether the oraisons we make will be accepted.

I WOULD not, however, have you imagine I am an enemy to those forms the church has directed ; on the contrary, I think we cannot address heaven with too much reverence and humility ; but I am vexed to hear disputes arise concerning the different modes of those forms, and that so great a stress is laid upon them, that very often, in attempting to maintain them, the essence they were intended to preserve is utterly destroyed.

You

You will wonder to find I am turned reasoner, especially on this argument, but I assure you there is nothing makes me so serious as when I see superstition and hypocrisy usurp the place of true piety; for whatever attachment I may have to the pleasures of this world, to be well received in the next, is the first aim of my ambition; after which, be assured, I rank your friendship, — being, dear *Euphrosine*,

Sincerely yours,

ALINDA



EPISTLE XL.

From ALBINUS to MIRA, with his opinion of a justly-celebrated divine poem, which she had recommended to his perusal.

Madam,



AM no longer what I was; am grown another creature since last I had the honour of seeing you; that inestimable poem, you were so good to mention to me, has lifted me with *St. Paul* into the third heaven: — My former being is exchanged for one more seraphic and refined; I am, methinks, no more an inhabitant of this earth: — I mix in the extatic society of glorified spirits, disdain to hold conversation with my fellow-mortals, and could I think of you as less than angel, should be above writing even to you.

I HAD gone through the greatest part of the poem, when, in the abundance of my heart, I wrote what I suppose you have read, and should

doubtless have gone on in the same strain of admiration, 'till I had probably tired you with my rhapsodies, if I had not been interrupted by the coming in of a friend, who seeing the book lie open before me, asked my opinion of it, which I gave in much the same rapturous terms I had begun to do to you.—*Have you read it quite through?* said he: to which I answering in the negative, *I will leave you then to finish it*, resumed he with a smile, *and when I see you next, you will tell me what you think of it.*

THESE words, and the manner in which they were spoke, raised a kind of impatient curiosity in me:—I shut myself up, and immediately began to do as he desired, leaving my letter to you unfinished;—the more I read, the more I wondered any one could imagine, as my friend had seemed to do, that the end of the poem was less worthy approbation than the beginning.—Every line glowed with the image of the Deity diffusing celestial transports!—Ineffable majesty, energy divine, shone in each period!—All was of a piece, and the poet's thought, with sacred inspiration fired, was lofty as his theme!—The poem ended, at least the business of it ceased, yet was there something still to read.—O God! what something?—How in a moment did my raptures vanish!—The heaven, open to me through so many pages, closed at once upon me;—I fell,—I sunk, with the author, deep into mortality again, and all my late elevated ideas of the *dignity of man* were chased and driven from my soul.—O! what are words?—What fine-turned thoughts?—What all the pomp of eloquence and learning?—Meer sounds to catch the unwary ear.—It is truth,—it is sacred *truth* alone can strike the heart, and fix

fix a lasting admiration there!—By *that* directed, how did the poet charm! and oh! how weak, how enervate was his art, when prostituted in the false logic of a *party* zeal, for the meanest ends!

IN fine, madam, this appendix, or address, or what you please to call it, at the end of the book, too evidently proves that *man*, however he may magnify the joys above the skies, has his *promotion*, for the short time allowed him on this spot he treads, the most at heart; but sure he merits double condemnation, who sacrilegiously makes heaven the dupe to serve a sordid wordly aim.—When scurrility is gloss'd with holy ardour, and the most cruel, possibly *unjust*, invectives are poured out under the sanction of devotion, what can an impartial reader think, but that he is listening to a wolf in sheep's cloathing!—I fear there are too many such; but I am angry with this author above all for the disappointment he has given me,—the great talents he is master of, and that spirit of piety which seemed to breathe through all his work, may make us imagine there is no possibility for mankind to be in earnest with *God*, and that all devotion is from the lips, while the heart is the votary of *mammon*.

IF to reform the manners of the age, by setting forth the miseries to which a nation given up to vice might justly expect to be reduced, had really been his sole intent, he certainly would have made use of other menaces, presented other dangers to our view, than those he has thought fit to mention.—Is the Almighty divested of his thunders, and his flaming arrows?—Are the contending elements no longer under his command?—Are the phials of his wrath exhausted, and the destroying

angels idle in their spheres?—Are there no earthquakes to be dreaded?—No *vulcanos*?—Are there no famine, pestilence, or other plagues left in the storehouse of eternal vengeance?—And are not these chastisements more befitting an angry Deity, and more terrible to a sinful land, than *papal* bulls, gallic bravadoes, or a few ragged ruffians of the north, as he calls them in derision?—But these were the bugbears of the time,—the terrors a-la-mode,—the peal rung for preferment both in church and state. How ambitious soever this author may be of a good residence in *heaven*, I think it pretty plain he was desirous of partaking the delicious baits of *earth* in his journey to immortality; whether he has not, in the pursuit of one, mistaken the road to the other, I will not pretend to determine.

I WOULD not, however, be thought to quarrel at the purpose of this address: to petition the *great* to endeavour by their own example to bring about a reformation of manners, was doubtless right; since from them, or some of them at least, it is that this torrent of corruption, luxury, and every kind of vice, which like a deluge overflows the land, and swallows up morality and religion in its rapid course, originally proceeds.—Were our *heads* once better, the less noble parts would soon partake the happy influence, and we should once more be *Britons*,—free *Britons*!—Not the slaves of licensed sin, premeditated folly:—To this had he confined himself, the design had been noble, and truly worthy such a genius; but by blending it with a matter altogether foreign, he not only sinks the *patriot* in the *time-server*, but also renders ineffectual that which he would have us believe was his only aim to inculcate.

IF what I have said may be thought too severe on the *man*, it is owing to my admiration of the *poet*.—I loved,—I revered,—I burned with the most ardent desire of a nearer acquaintance with a person, whose conversation I imagined would rectify whatever is *faulty* in my composition, and improve the *good*; but his deviating from the grand design, has made me see, to my great mortification, that though I might receive much benefit from his *wit* and *learning*, my soul would be still to seek for those more valuable advantages it expected.

As to the work itself, notwithstanding this unhappy, ill-judged conclusion, it questionless answers the high character given of it, both as a *poem* and a *lesson*.—I should be sincerely glad to find it have a due effect; and that every reader may be convinced what ought to be the first aim of *man*.—This is a wish, in which I am certain you will readily join with him, who is, with the extremest respect, madam,

Your most humble servant,

ALBINUS.



EPISTLE XLI.

From ASPASIA to FLORELLA, in answer to one wherein she had desired some explanation of the quarrel between two gentlemen, who had been long the most intimate friends.

My dear FLORELLA,

 THINK myself happy in being able to give you a pretty exact account of an affair which, tho' much talked of, is little comprehended: My intimacy with *Delia*, the unhappy wife of *Philarchus*; has

let me into particulars known to few besides the persons concerned; you will wonder I say *unhappy*, as that lady, being left an orphan, without friends or dower, was married to a man of his rank, and treated by him with a tenderness not always found, even where there is an equality of birth and fortune; but you will be convinced by what I have to tell you, that peace of mind is not the sure attendant on grandeur, and that also there may be oddities of humour which rob even mutual love of all its blessings.

I WAS surprized with the rest of the world when I heard those inseparable friends, *Philarchus* and *Dorantes*, had met as enemies in *Hyde-Park*, and that the former was brought home much wounded. I went to visit *Delia* on the occasion, and found her in a condition truly pitiable.—She was lying on a couch, her hair dishevelled, her looks wild, her eyes streaming with tears, despair and grief visibly painted in every feature: As soon as she saw me, *O Aspasia*, cried she, *I was going to send to you, but this kind visit has prevented me.—I longed to tell you to what a wretch my fatal imprudence, and too nice a sense of honour, has reduced me.—*I will not trouble you with my reply, nor the prelude she made to the melancholly story she had to relate, which, after she had begun, was a hundred times broke off by exclamations on my side, and comments on her's; but let us come directly to the matter of fact, as it happened.

SOME few months after her marriage, *Dorantes*, who was scarce ever from their house, began, on every little absence of *Philarchus*, to behave to her in a manner she thought unbecoming

coming of him to the wife of his friend, yet loth to suspect a man, so dear to her husband, could be guilty of so vile a treachery, she repelled whatever suggestions of this nature rose in her mind, till one day he declared to her in plain terms, that he was violently in love with her, and neglected no arguments that men generally make use of on such occasions, to convince her of the ardency of his passion: She assured me that the answer she gave him was in the severest terms she could invent, yet did he not appear in the least rebuffed at it, but took hold of the next opportunity of being alone with her to repeat his suit with more vehemence than before. She treated it, if possible, with yet greater contempt, but all she could say, and the reproaches she uttered on the ingratitude and baseness of his attempt, was as ineffectual to oblige him to desist, as his importunities were of rendering her more complying.—This preposterous courtship went on for several weeks; she had no way totally to avoid him.—*Philarchus* often went abroad after dinner, would set them two to picquet, and when at any time she pretended indisposition, or any other plea, to retire, he would say to her, *My dear, I insist on your giving Dorantes your company;—you must always regard him as my second self, and think that in obliging him you confer the greatest obligation on me.*

JUDGE, said she to me, *of the terrible dilemma I was in, my heart was shocked to think how much his generous unsuspecting friendship was abused, yet durst not undeceive him lest some fatal consequence should ensue on his discovery of the treachery.—I was besides, added she, ashamed to own, even to him, that any man had the confidence to address me*

on so dishonourable a score, and these two reasons joined together it was that subjected me to hear, for so long a time, discourses the most detestable both to my virtue, and the sincere affection I ever had for Philarchus. But at last, resumed she, after having given some time to tears, this late bold audacious lover began to approach me with a more timid air,—he still talked to me of his passion, but that passion now seemed altogether the reverse of what it had been,—he even praised the virtue which opposed him, which giving me some hopes he was growing ashamed of his folly, I altered behaviour also, treated him with somewhat more mildness, and endeavoured, by all the little arguments I could muster up, to bring him to reason, and make a perfect convert of him.—He listened to me with all the attention I could wish, and instead of making me any answer, O Philarchus! Philarchus! cried he, lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, how wretched have you made me! An exclamation of this nature, continued she, might very well surprize me, but though I was utterly unable to comprehend it, forbore to desire any explanation, till he too fatally, for my eternal peace, gave it of himself.

INDEED, *Florella*, I weep at the remembrance of the agonies this poor creature was in when she came to this part of the story, which in fine had in it a mystery such as I believe the most keen conjecture would not be able to reach. *Philarchus* having married her merely for love, took it afterwards into his head, that she became his wife only through a motive of *interest*, and had so little affection for his person, that she might possibly be prevailed upon to listen to the addresses of any other man, who was young and agreeable;—he resolved however to make the
trial;

tryal; — *Dorantes* was his friend, and he thought he could depend on his integrity not to carry the matter farther than was consistent with honour, but he was to press her by all the means in his power, and to try her virtue to the utmost. The young gentleman was extremely loth to undertake this task, but *Philarchus* would take no denial, on which he began his attack as you have heard; but, alas, how dangerous it is to sport with fire! the passion he but feigned at first, in compliance with his friend's request, took hold on him unawares:—He became as much charmed in reality, as he had pretended to be, and as he owed the desires he was possessed of entirely to the whim of *Philarchus*, thought himself under no obligation to deny himself the gratification of them, if by any means he could obtain it.—The most likely means to succeed, he thought, would be to acquaint *Delia* with the whole proceeding.—He flattered himself that resentment for so ill-grounded a jealousy would get the better of the most inexorable virtue, and that she would think it no crime to indulge an inclination she was unjustly suspected of being guilty of: But that woman must have the sense of honour little rooted in her heart that can render such a supposition warrantable;—that of *Delia* is more firm and sincere:—Far from listening to the arguments he urged on this head, she affected not to believe what he said in relation to her husband, upbraided his double treachery and baseness in the most bitter words, and flung from him with a disdain which made him tremble.

HER displeasure against *Philarchus*, however, was not the less for her concealing it from his rival. The indignity she thought his jealousy did

did to her love and virtue, filled her with the most poignant anguish, and compelled her to be guilty of an indiscretion to which she owes her present unhappiness. — Forgetful of the obligations she had to him, in refusing for her sake matches in point of birth and fortune greatly her superiors, she poured out all the resentment of her soul in words more grating than it is probable she would have made use of had passion left the least room for reflection. — He heard her however without testifying any violent emotions, till she had ended all she had to say, and then, *It is well, madam,* cryed he, *I now see of what value your boasted virtue is, since I am convinced Dorantes never would have betrayed my secret, without receiving another of greater consequence from you in exchange.* — These words stung her to the heart, but she had no opportunity of replying; he shut himself into his apartment, and would by no means be prevailed upon to see her any more that night, though she went several times to his chamber-door entreating admittance. Early the next morning he went out alone, and in three hours after was brought home in the condition you have been told, wounded, but not dangerously. — It was soon known with whom he had fought, though the motive of the quarrel was by both kept a secret. — *Dorantes*, who had also received some slight hurts, told those that visited him, that *Philarchus* came to his bedside, and swore to stab him that instant if he did not immediately rise and accompany him to the place where they engaged, without mentioning the least word of the nature of their quarrel. — *Philarchus* makes no other answer to any questions put to him, than that *Dorantes* is a villain. — It is but too plain he retains the most cruel suspicions of *Delia*, for he
will

will not suffer her to come into his presence, and whenever any one happens to speak of her, crys out, that he has neither *wife* nor *friend*. This misunderstanding between them occasions whispers little to the reputation of *Delia*: How the affair will end it is impossible to guess, but she apprehends a separation: — There are some people who though sensible they have been in an error, if reproached with it, are too stubborn to acknowledge they were wrong; if *Philarchus* happens to be of this number, it will indeed be difficult to bring about a reconciliation.

THUS, my dear *Florella*, are all the joys of this once happy pair blasted, I fear for ever; since were *Philarchus* sensible of his folly, and convinced how small room he had for jealousy, what he has made her suffer on this account would doubtless dwell upon her mind, to the destruction of her peace. — She would be in continual terrors lest he should relapse into suspicions, and obliged to keep such a continual guard over all her words and actions, as must infallibly destroy all harmony between them: In my opinion, parting in such a situation would be the least evil; *Delia* however thinks otherwise: Were *Philarchus* as indifferent to her as I really believe he is the contrary, rank and equipage have charms too flattering to a young heart to be easily surrendered, and as she brought no portion, her future maintenance must depend wholly on his generosity. — I endeavour to give her hopes, since she so ardently desires it, that the love he once had for her will in time revive, and get the better of his caprice and resentment; but as he abates nothing of his fullness, all I can say on that head affords small consolation.

THIS

THIS is all I have at present to relate of the affair, as soon as I receive any further information, will not fail to communicate it. — Let us, my dear *Florella*, thank heaven we have not husbands of the same humour with *Philarchus*. My compliments to yours, and believe me to be what I am, with great sincerity,

Your most affectionate friend,

ASPASIA.



EPISTLE XLII.

From Althea to a lady who had turned her daughter out of doors on the discovery of her being guilty of a criminal amour; remonstrating to her the ill consequences that this step may occasion, and earnestly pressing her to call home the young lady.

Madam,

THEY say that advice, when unasked, is impertinent, yet sure it ought not to be accounted as such when coming from a Person whose sincerity and friendship we have no room to doubt. — I could not forgive myself for seeing any one, much more one I love, run blindfold on the brink of a precipice, without giving some warning of the danger: — Pardon me, madam, if I consider you as such; — all passion is blindness, and though I am ready to allow the justice of yours, I would fain prevent you from suffering it to hurry you to lengths that may be fatal to the honour of your family, and your own future peace.

It

IT was with an unspeakable concern I heard some rumours to the disadvantage of miss ***'s reputation, but that concern received a very great addition, on being told you had confirmed the report by banishing her from your house.—You are very sensible that reports of this nature are frequently no more than the suggestions of malice and envy; this, however true, might have passed for such, and consequently have died away in time, had you not seemed to think she could be capable of acting in a manner so unworthy her birth and education.—Indeed, madam, I cannot help thinking you have carried your severity to too high a pitch:—If the young lady is in reality as guilty as she is represented, proclaiming her fault will be far from making it less, but, on the contrary, may rather incline her to think, that having lost all it behoved her to preserve, forfeited all she had to hope, and suffered all she had to fear, she no longer has any measures to keep, but may indulge her inclinations to the most ruinous excess.—Who can answer for the event?—Undone by inadvertency, she may become abandoned by despair, and irrecoverably lost to all sense of honour and of virtue.

FROM my Soul I wish you had not taken this step, but it is done; yet though past recall, I fancy may not be altogether past retrieve.—You have forced her from your house, driven her, heaven knows where, yet I presume the wanderer may be found:—Let her be sought, permit her to return, not into your presence, that perhaps might be too great a condescension, and occasion a presumption in her of as ill consequence as her present despair; but suffer her to remain beneath your roof, or that of some trusty friend,
till

till preparation can be made for sending her to your country seat, under the care and inspection of a person qualified to set before her eyes the misfortune to which she had reduced herself, and the inevitable destruction she must have been plunged into, had not your tenderness and paternal affection prevented it. — I can think it scarce possible a young lady, trained up in the principles of religion and virtue, and who had in you the strictest example of both continually before her eyes, can so far degenerate as not to be easily awaked to a just sense of her folly, if proper means are made use of for that end.

THERE have been instances where virtue, once reclaimed, has, like a broken limb, grown stronger than before. — Remembrance of what has happened, generally gives a double caution to avoid, if possible, the like accident again : It is, however, certainly worth your while to make the experiment, and not because she has fallen under one temptation, endanger her being exposed to others, as she infallibly must be, if left entirely to herself. By confining her in the way I mention, you will at least deprive her of the opportunity of repeating her crime, and her seducer from any new occasions of triumph.

BESIDES, madam, scandal, ever solicitous of finding fresh objects, soon grows weary of the old, and as this age, heaven knows, presents but too many, all discourse concerning mis^s * * *, will cease of itself, and be lost among a croud of more recent adventures, especially when she is out of sight, and nothing farther is to be related of her than what is already known.

THUS

THUS will you not only save from perdition a darling, and till now esteemed a most deserving child, but also secure yourself from those horrid shocks, which on the report of her future behaviour you might probably receive. I entreat you therefore, madam, for her's and for your own sake, not to persist in a resentment, the effects of which cannot but be fatal to both. — A moment's consideration will shew you, that as the mischief is done, and past recall, common prudence requires you to prevent it from spreading farther; — you would not surely, because a part of your house was by any accident impaired, suffer the whole building to fall to the ground; and of how little value is the most magnificent edifice of human invention, when compared to the glorious workmanship of the creator?

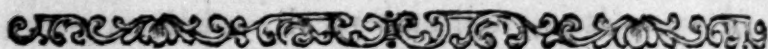
Do not imagine, madam, that I am insensible of what a situation, such as yours, must inflict. When I reflect on the pangs you suffered in bringing this fair transgressor into the world, the pleasure her infant years afforded, and the charming hopes you had conceived of seeing her one day make the most amiable figure in the world, I own it must render the disappointment terrible to sustain, and is of a nature that demands all the resignation of a *christian*, and the courage of a *heroine*; — yet as I am very well satisfied you are perfectly the *one*, and that on many occasions you have given proofs you are the *other* also, I hope you will, in this severest exigence, summon to your aid the noble principles which both inspire: — In which confidence I remain, as ever, madam,

Your real friend and humble servant,

ALTHEA.

P. S.

P. S. Instead of sending this, I should have waited on you in person, but am prevented by a slight indisposition; as soon as it wears off enough for me to endure the air, shall not fail doing myself that pleasure; in the mean time I conjure you to reflect seriously on the above, which relates to your own happiness as well as your daughter's.



EPISTLE XLIII.

From LOTHARIO *to* GLORIANA; *an excuse for not having waited on her for some days.*

Madam,



ESTINY has been extremely cruel to me of late. — I have been compelled to do the things I would not, and altogether unable to do what I am most desirous of. — It is an age since I saw you, — nay seven ages, seven long tedious days; yet did the penalty of your future displeasure depend upon my giving a good account for my remissness, I fear I must be miserable: — Business I have had none, — pleasure I could have none out of your company, — what then shall I say detained me? — I will tell you, madam; there are a sort of creatures in the world, mere animals, who for no other reason than because they go upon two legs, imagine themselves men, and having no ideas of their own, are continually disturbing those of other people. — When wretches of this kind happen to be so circumstanced as neither to be shunned with decency, nor reprehended with safety,

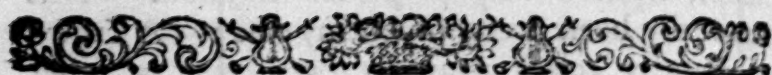
safety, the person they take it into their heads to haunt, is in a very perplexed situation.— This has really been pretty much my case : — A crowd of country relations are in town, one or other of whom are every moment breaking in upon me, and putting my mind out of that temper I would always wish to preserve, when I have the honour of waiting on you.— But be assured, that tho' I cannot presume to approach you till I am a little more my former self, my heart is still the same, and a constant attendant at your *ruelle* both night and day. — I toast your health in bumpers of *champaign* and *burgundy* just landed, which indeed is the only satisfaction I can taste in the company I keep at present : Thank heaven however for the hope I have of being shortly rid of this impediment to a happiness more sublime, as well as more substantial. In the mean time I beg you will be assured, that never young senator longed more to appear the man of consequence in the chair of a committee, nor officer for a war to return to plunder and full pay, nor judge for store of plots, felonies, and murders, to refine upon law, or rather to refine it all away, than I do to testify how very much I am the charming *Gloriana's*

Most humble,

And most devoted servant,

LOTHARIO.

End of the THIRD BOOK.



EPISTLES.

BOOK IV.

EPISTLE XLIV.

From ASTREA to LEONIDAS, requesting his sincere sentiments in relation to the difference between the Ancients and the Moderns, as to the great actions for which each have been celebrated.

S I R,



YOU would think it strange that being at present the guest of a lady of the first quality in *England*, I should have a moment to spare from the drawing-room, card-table, masquerade, or those thousand other amusements of the city, if you did not know her grace has a genius too refined and delicate to look on these things as pleasures; and that it is chiefly to the aversion I have for them, that I am indebted for the honour of being ranked among the few she calls her friends.

IN

IN this voluntary seclusion from all the modish entertainments, and consequently from the greatest part of our acquaintance, you will believe we employ many hours in reading; but, perhaps, you have a better opinion of my modesty, than to imagine I take upon me to comment on authors, and to arraign antiquity; yet I assure you I have sometimes the confidence to do it. — We had last night more company than usual, and the conversation happening to turn on the different manners of the *ancients* and *moderns*, a preference was given to the former, which seemed to me to have somewhat of injustice in it, and I could not forbear saying, that if those who wrote on that subject had not painted both the men and the women of those times in colours rather too strong for life, yet I could not find the merits of any of their *heroes* or *heroines* so supernatural as not to be equalled by those of a much later date: — That though I should be sorry to rob them of any part of that admiration they had maintained through such a long train of ages, and was ready to allow them all the great qualities, and to have done all the great actions recorded of them by historians and poets, yet I could not endure it should be thought that nature, in adorning them, had exhausted the whole essence of perfection, and left only the dregs for future generations.

FINDING myself opposed, I added, with some warmth, that even the authority on which these extraordinary characters were founded, was frequently suspected; — that *Herodotus*, though called the father of history, had been found to trip; and as for the poets, it was acknowledged by every one, that they had a licence to embellish and enrich their descriptions with all the

graces they could introduce, and that many of the characters they drew might reasonably be supposed to be rather what men should be, than what they really were.

ON this, one of the company, who I could find regarded more the phraseology than veracity of an author, asked me, with a kind of sneer, if I would also maintain that the *wit* of the *moderns* came in any degree of competition with the *ancients*. To which I boldly answering in the affirmative; he cryed out, — A proof, madam! A proof of what you say! Let us see you produce a second *Homer*, *Virgil*, or *Pindar*, among the *poets*; an *orator* to equal *Cicero* or *Demosthenes*; a *philosopher* like the divine *Plato*, *Socrates*, *Aristotle*, and many more ornaments of antiquity, whom I could name: — I was about to answer him, and had immediately in my head a great number of examples to set against those he had named in each different science; but I was prevented by another in the company, who said, you will find it less difficult, madam, to find parallels in the spheres my friend has mentioned, than in that of publick spirit; — What latter ages have been honoured with a *Regulus*, an *Aristides*, a *Brutus*, or a *Cato*! — I am afraid that here I should indeed have been greatly at a loss; but luckily the arrival of some other visitors broke off the dispute; but as there is more than a possibility it may be one day renewed, it will be policy in me to prepare myself for it in the best manner I can.

It is you, Sir, on whom I depend for this purpose; I have already gone through all the arguments I am mistress of, and if you are not
so

so good to furnish me with others, my antagonists will have the better of me, and you know it is proverbial, that nothing can be a greater mortification, to one of my sex, than not to have the last word.—But raillery apart, I shall take it extremely kind of you to oblige me with your sincere sentiments in this matter, and if you add some remarks on the change of modes and manners in our own nation, the favour will be still greater.—The dutchess joins in my request, as knowing no man more capable of making a just distinction between things which seem most perplexed to others, nor who would be more ready to contribute towards *realizing* the character some of my friends flatter me with, of being a woman of tolerable understanding, though I despair of ever giving a greater proof of it than in being, with an unfeigned respect, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

ASTREA.



EPISTLE XLV.

[*Answer to the foregoing.*]

From LEONIDAS to ASTREA, concerning the difference between the characters, manners, and behaviour of the ancients and moderns, and the most probable cause assigned for it.

Madam,



S I was not present when you maintained the dispute you mention, it is impossible for me to know what arguments you made use of in defence of your opinion ; but am pretty certain it will be

little in my power, or indeed in that of any one else, to add to what your own great reading, and yet much greater capacity, could supply you with on any subject you were pleased to take in hand.—I shall, however, obey your commands in the best manner I am able.

It is a strange thing, methinks, that people are fond of going so far backward into time to search for objects of admiration;—that their ears should be so open to the prodigies of a thousand, or two thousand years ago, yet keep their eyes close shut against those of later date; the world has doubtless produced many *modern* great princes, and generals, who may be put on an equality with the most celebrated of the *ancients*;—the actions of our *English* Edward the third, his son named the *black prince*, and Henry the fifth, are not so obsolete as to be quite forgotten.—*Peter*, justly named the great, late czar of *Muscovy*, and his competitor in glory, *Charles* the XII. of *Sweden*, are yet more recent instances that *heroism* was not confined to ages long since past.

If examples of this kind are more rare than formerly, it is not because the *abilities* of the *moderns* are less, but because their *principles* are more depraved, and in that case indeed it may be said that the manners of the *ancients* are to be preferred to those of latter times: A distinction, therefore, ought to be made between the *moral virtues*, and the *natural talents* of mankind, for in proportion to the *former* the *latter* will always be exerted.—It is not to be doubted but there are, and in all ages have been, men capable of performing as much as is in the power of man,
if

if the emulation and noble ardour of doing well, were not extinguished by the little regard men of wealth and power shew towards the encouragement of merit and virtue.—Every one knows that before luxury and corruption got footing in the world, true bravery and magnanimity more abounded; and we still perceive that those nations which most adhere to an original plainness and simplicity, produce both the most hardy warriors, and the most steady patriots.—Much in this point is also owing to the example of those who govern; so true are the words of a reverend divine and poet,

*'Tis power's supreme prerogative to stamp
On others minds, an image of their own.*

AND then again he says, concerning the glory of a commonwealth, that nothing can be more certain, than that,

*As govern'd well or ill, states rise and sink;
State ministers, as upright, or corrupt,
Are balm or poison in a nation's veins;
Health, or distemper, hasten or retard
The period of her pride, her day of doom;
'Tis fix'd by fate, irrevocably fix'd!
Virtue and vice are empire's life and death.*

It is not, therefore, madam, as you justly have observed, that nature's treasures are exhausted, or that the almighty has lost either the will or power to continue to mankind those blessings he at first bestowed upon them.—The seeds of glory, integrity, and all that constitutes a hero, are sown in every soul, though too frequently kept from sprouting into action by the causes I have assigned. But then it must be acknowledged, that where they do bring forth

fruit, and gloriously rise above all impediments which would obstruct their growth, it is a wonder, and demands public love; so that no hero of antiquity can be said to merit half the applause of a *modern* good man, who has the corruption of the times, the prevalence of example, and a thousand other difficulties, most of which were unknown to former ages, to struggle with and overcome.

You see, madam, I am obliged, though I assure you very much against my inclination, to give it against you in this point; and to allow that the *ancients*, as to their *manners*, that is in other words, their *virtue* and *morality*, very much deserve the preference given them over the *moderns*; but then I hope to make my peace with you, by saying at the same time that they excelled in nothing else: — That the ideas of the *moderns*, even now, are as elevated, and their abilities as great, in every respect, as *Greece* or *Rome* produced.

AND this, I think, may serve as an answer to the challenge of your second antagonist, and am afraid it is the only one can be given to any of them. — It cannot be denied but that the *poets* he mentioned have been equalled by few, excelled by none that came after them, yet I do not believe this entirely owing to the power of an uncommon genius, but to the advantage they had of writing in languages, that were ascertained in their highest elegance and purity, and which are therefore standards of literature to this day. — Great men they were it is certain; but whether, had they never been born, nor their works transmitted to posterity, we should not have seen others, as worthy of admiration, is a dubious point, and can only be deter-

determined by the Supreme Giver of all our boasted qualifications:—This, however, I can aver to my own knowledge, that I have seen writings of those who never read *Homer* and *Virgil*, so much resembling them, both in sentiments and expressions, that one would almost have imagined the passages transcribed; which may serve to build at least a very probable conjecture, that the world would not till now have wanted an *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, or *Æneid*.—The same thing may also be said in relation to *Cicero* and *Demosthenes*; but as to philosophy I am apt to think the gentleman forgot there was a *Newton*, who perhaps is as great an honour to the *moderns*, as any of those whose works are the triumph of antiquity.

I COME now to the third, who had the courage to enter the lists against so fair and potent a combatant, and must confess he seems to be much better armed than either of the former. In these later ages *patriots*, indeed, have not been the growth of every clime; those who have pretended to the name, have been rather disguised *enemies* than *friends* to their country; their feigned efforts to serve the commonwealth but so many snares for destruction; and under the specious shew of a disinterested honest zeal for *liberty*, have laid a foundation for perpetual *slavery*.

YET, wherefore is it thus?—These very monsters want not abilities to bring about the glorious end they seem to aim at, but the *ill* they had it in their power to do presented a prospect of more advantage to themselves, than the *good* they affected to pursue.—*Public spirit* is but another name for *honour*, and where that is wanting, as a late noble author tells us, what else

*Ennobles the rude passions of our frame
With thirst of glory, and desire of fame;
Strength and courage are wild dang'rous force,
Unless this soften, and direct their course:
This the rich treasure of a gen'rous breast,
That gives a stamp and standard to the rest.*

WHAT then, madam, can be said in defence of the *moderns* in point of behaviour?—Impossible will it be for all your flowing wit and eloquence, supported by the most enchanting and persuasive delivery that ever issued from a human mouth, to argue against facts which every where, in every country, and in every station, are demonstrable to all who have eyes, and the power of observation:—Too sure and too plain it is, that a sad depravity of manners has been creeping on the world for a long succession of time, and is now so much avowed, encouraged, and become the mode, that many, not yet infected with the disease, are either afraid or ashamed to own themselves in health. Content yourself, therefore, I beseech you for the future, with vindicating the *talents* of the *moderns*; those may shine with no less lustre than their ancestors; but their *deeds*, alas! are of a quite different cast.

I PERCEIVE those champions for antiquity with whom you encountered, however severe they might be on the present failures of our times, had the complaisance to set none of the *heroines* of past ages in opposition to the ladies of *modern* date, so find no occasion to make any remarks how far they may have improved or degenerated since the days of the faithful *Andromache*, the chaste *Lucretia*, the resolute *Portia*,
the

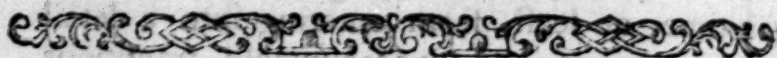
the prudent *Cornelia*, the learned *Hypatia*, and a great number of others renowned in story for virtue in its different branches.

I MUST also, madam, beg to be excused for this time, at least, from entering into a detail of the various and unaccountable transitions which have happened in the modes, manners, and customs of this all-apeing island:—To particularize the changes from *good* to *bad*, and from *bad* to *good* again, in a continual alternative since the reign of *Boadicea*, or indeed even since our second *Boadicea* in her amiable qualities, Queen *Elizabeth*, would take up more time than I can just now spare, or perhaps than you would have patience to employ in reading, more especially if I were to describe the strange metamorphoses the ladies have passed thro' since the old *British* rusticity wore off; since from going to court in a *grogram* robe, they feed their lap-dogs on rich *brocade* and *embroidery*;—since from drinking *simple element*, they toast healths in *frontinac*, *tokay*, and sometimes *brandy*;—since blushing has been out of fashion, and they are only ashamed if caught to look down at a *double entendre*;—since they have thrown away the *needle*, and taken up the *whip*, hunt, and ride races with the men. This would require a volume, and I am afraid the length of this letter has already tired you.—I would have made it more palatable, if a panegyrick on the moderns could have been consistent with that sincerity you enjoined, and which I would always wish to preserve.—I flatter myself, however, it will not put you so far out of your accustomed sweetness of humour, as to make you omit rendering my compliments as acceptable as possible to her

grace, or to imagine I am, or ever can be, other than, madam,

Your most humble servant,

LEONIDAS.



EPISTLE XLVI.

*From ASTREA to Mrs. ****, on the death of her only son, a young gentleman of very promising expectations.*

Dear madam,

THOUGH I am sensible nothing can be offered for your consolation that you are not already mistress of, and that if you do not find sufficient within yourself to make you support this severe stroke with patience, nobody is capable of prescribing to you; yet as it is not in my power to know you grieve without grieving with you, so it is equally impossible for me to refrain testifying how deeply I am affected with your loss. — The death of master **** is indeed a misfortune to the publick, as his early virtues gave the fairest prospect of being one of the greatest and most useful ornaments to the publick; and this very reflection doubtless aggravates your affliction. — The charming ideas you had formed of the amiable figure he would one day make, all on a sudden dashed! To see those eyes, so lately sparkling with all the fires of wit and spirit, now closed for ever, and all your earthly hopes buried in the silent tomb, is a shock which nothing could alleviate but the assurance, that though you are deprived of your expectations in this world,

world, you will hereafter see them more fully accomplished in a superior orb, where no disease, no death, can deprive him of his glory.—This assurance I am well convinced you do not want, yet at the same time know that in these cases nature is at enmity with reason, and will get the better in spite of all arguments; for as Mr. Dryden tells us truly,

*Reason was given to curb our headstrong will,
And yet but shews a weak physician's skill;
Gives nothing while the raging passions last,
But stays to cure us, till the worst is past.*

BUT, my dear madam, there are two considerations that to a person of your disposition may have more weight than any in which yourself is alone concerned: And these are, that while you afflict yourself, you afflict all those whom you would wish to render happy; and that as your case is not singular, a mother who labours under the same calamity with you, and perhaps many others from which you are totally exempt, will be little able to support that load of sorrows, a part of which she sees you sink beneath.

I THEREFORE dare believe that a lady, who in every action of her life has hitherto seemed to think herself born more for the happiness of others than her own, will, in this exigence, trying as it is, give a proof of a fortitude no less rare and exemplary, than those other beneficial virtues, which have rendered her so justly dear to all that know her, and in particular to,

Dear madam,

Your sincere friend,

ASTREA.



EPISTLE XLVII.

From ASTREA to a gentleman, who being under some misfortunes, and relieved by her, had mistook her good-nature for the effects of a secret liking of his person, and on that supposition presumed to send her a love-letter,

Sir,



AM extremely sorry that what I thought a virtue in me should be construed into a vice, and that my hospitality and readiness to do you any little service on the account of your misfortunes, instead of exciting in you a grateful esteem, has drawn on me the greatest affront that, in my opinion, was in your power to offer. I am not, however, so much concerned for your own sake, who, I perceive, have vanity enough to buoy you up under any disappointment, as I am for that of many others, who, through the calamities of the times, may stand in need of assistance from those to whom fortune has been less unkind; because it will make me for the future fearful of conferring the least obligation on any person of a different sex, as I cannot be assured he will not return it in the manner you have done.—I send you back your letter, and with it this advice,—to be more wary for the future how too good an opinion of yourself tempts you to mistake *pity* for *love*, lest you convert the *one* into *contempt*, instead of inspiring the least share of the other.—I am pretty confident your observation of this rule will be of singular use to a
man

man of your way of thinking, and is the last act of charity you must ever expect from

ASTREA.



EPISTLE XLVIII.

*From PHILENIA to the Reverend Doctor * * * *,
assuring him she was a true penitent; acquaint-
ing him with the means of her conversion, and
beseeching his assistance to strengthen her pious re-
solution.*

Reverend Sir,

I TOOK the liberty of intreating a visit from you;—I own it was with good reason you refused,—you thought it would ill become a person of your character to be seen with one of mine:—Oh had the beginning of my sin been thus discouraged, I had not shamefully persevered in it so many years; but alas! bold and public as it was, no one of all my boasted friends were kind enough to represent it to me in its true colours. —I was still flattered,—still carressed,—and however censured and contemned in private, found nothing but love and respect in public.—Pernicious complaisance! that makes no distinction between vice and virtue, in persons of my rank; as if title gave a sanction to iniquity, and the mean-born were the only sinners.—But my long blinded eyes at last are open, I see the odiousness of my crime; and this unhappy wretch, who scarce a week ago merited only your severest displeasure, has now a claim both to your care and pity.—
This,

This, sir, I hope you will acknowledge, when I confess to you, to what a superlative height of wickedness I was arrived, when heaven was pleased to bring about my conversion by the most extraordinary means.

It was but last *Thursday* I was at the *masquerade* with *Adrastus*; he came home with me, and after two or three hours given to repose, passed the day, as he had done the night, in revels, defying equally the censure of mankind, and the wrath of heaven. — We were at supper when one of his domestics, who always knew where to find him, came and acquainted him that his wife was then in the agonies of death, and begged to take her last farewell. *Pish*, cried he, *this has been the trick twenty times within these two months*, (for so long had she been judged past recovery by her physicians,) *but go home*, added he, carelessly, *I shall come presently*. When the fellow was gone, I ridiculed the promise he had given, pretended to resent it, told him I had depended on his company the whole night, put in practice all the arts of the most infamous of my sex, in order to detain him; for indeed I took an impious pride in triumphing over the virtuous tenderness of the woman whose rites I invaded. — He yielded to my pressures, left me not till morning, nor then till I had exacted a promise from him of returning the same evening. — The hour in which I expected him being elapsed, I grew impatient at the delay, and some time after sent a footman to him, with orders to tell him, I must needs see him; but the fellow returned with news that his lady lying then dead in the house, *Adrastus* could not be spoke with by any body. — This, though I looked upon as meer matter of form, I was unable to brook,

brook, and went myself the next day, resolving to upbraid him for not breaking through such an insignificant rule of behaviour, when he could not be ignorant I should resent his observing it.— I had been so accustomed to run in a free manner up into his dressing-room, that I little expected any rebuff in doing so now, and was equally surprised as enraged, when his valet de chambre met me at the top of the stair-case, and desired I would not insist on going any farther, for his lord had commanded him to let no body, particularly myself, be admitted to him.— In the wildness of my passion at that time, it is much to be wondered at, that I did not force my passage in spite of all he could have done to prevent it, but I contented myself with railing so loud that I knew he must hear me, till I was quite out of breath, and at last returned home with an intention to write all that the fury of a disappointed woman could inspire.— But I had not time to vent half the anguish of my soul in this only way I had to do it, when a servant from *Adrastus* brought a billet in which I found these words.

Madam,

“ I AM sorry to hear that an ungovernable
“ passion has transported you to a behaviour
“ which so much exposes both of us; though,
“ alas! that was but too much done before:—
“ I beg, however, that for the future you will
“ forbear either coming or sending to my house.
“ I owe too much to the memory of the person
“ now lying dead before me, probably through
“ the deep sense she had of my ingratitude, ever
“ to see a person more for whose sake I have
“ rendered myself the worst of men.— I am now
“ convinced there is an eternity which will be
“ dreadful

“ dreadful to both you and me, if we do not
“ endeavour by our future conduct to atone
“ for the errors of the past :—Think not more
“ therefore of me, but with that horror, I shall
“ do of you.—Farewell for ever in this world,
“ may heaven forgive and receive us in the
“ next.

ADRASTUS.”

As I have begun my confession, reverend and worthy sir, I shall go through it, even to the laying open what passed in the most vile and hidden recess of my soul.—I was so far from being touched with this remonstrance, that after having torn it in pieces, I burst into execrations against him, the world, and, in my impious rage, spared not even heaven itself;—I scarce remember the words I made use of, but know they were such as I should tremble to repeat, and would be too shocking for you to be told come out of the mouth of a woman of my birth and education.—I raved till I was half dead;—I fell into fits, in which condition the fellow left me to the care of my woman;—I continued by intervals the whole remainder of the day, in a condition little different from death; so strongly do the pernicious passions work on a mind not fortified by religious maxims.—Physicians were sent for, but I would take nothing of their prescriptions, well knowing my distemper was beyond their art.—I was put to bed, and two persons sat on each side, watching every breath I drew :—Sleep for a long time was a stranger to my eyes; but at length I fell into a kind of slumber, more dreadful by far than all my waking visions.—I thought the shade of my deceased lord stood full before me, and in a dismal voice
cried

cried out, — *repent, repent, or for all these things the Lord will bring thee into judgment.* — Oh ! how shall I describe the terrors in which I started up ! — and full awake, demanded of my attendants what they had seen ; they answered, *nothing*, and begged me to compose myself ; — I did so, but still methought I heard the doleful accents : — Stung by the resentments of conscience, I could not rest ; the recollection of a husband who gave me every proof of tender love while he lived, and enriched me at his death, whose memory I had thus dishonoured, haunted my soul ; — in vain I sought to fly from myself. — I was all horror and confusion, yet far from that true sorrow, which could give the least claim to mercy. — I looked on myself as the most forlorn and wretched creature in the world, yet had not a sufficient hatred of the crime which has made me so, and I even then had sense enough to know,

*That while our former flames remain within,
Repentance is but want of power to sin.*

BUT, thank heaven, my heart was soon after touched with a more sensible remorse. — I received a second billet from *Adraftus*, wherein he acquainted me that his wife expired in about an hour after he came home ; that she retained her senses to the last moment, and amidst the agonies of her dissolution, expressed herself to him in such tender terms, that he could not avoid being greatly affected with them ; but that which completed his conversion was a letter she had wrote to him, and ordered should be delivered to him, as soon as she was dead : — This letter, he said, had brought him to a just sense of his past folly, and he therefore enclosed it to me, hoping

hoping it would have the same effect on me, assuring me at the same time, that to avoid all future temptations on my score, he was resolved to leave *England* in a few days.

THINK not, dear sir, that my contrition is less sincere because *Adroftus* had the advantage of leading me the way;—no, he was first ashamed of his error, only because he was first convinced of the enormity of it; and were he to relapse and turn apostate to those sacred principles, of which all his behaviour assures me he is now become a faithful disciple, and should again tempt me with all those undoing arguments that won me to shame, and even to glory in that shame, I should now detest, should hate him more than I ever loved.—O be assured that my penitence is real and unfeigned,—let your sacred admonitions confirm it in my soul. I am sometimes tempted to think my crime beyond forgiveness,—at others to seek excuses for it, and lay the blame on nature, the merits of my undoer, and the example of others: Shield me I beseech you from the two extremes of *despair* and *presumption*:—Teach me, alas! too much a stranger to each sacred rite, in what manner I shall direct my prayers, so as to hope they may be received at the throne of mercy:—Instruct me by what mortification of the senses I may atone for the error of having indulged them to such a guilty excess.—Be assured I will obey your precepts, and treasure them in my heart as the words of a descending angel:—Methinks even now I find some consolation in the confession I have made you,—a gleam of joy darts through my benighted soul; the prospect before me is enlightened,—the gloomy horrors vanish, and peace, a heavenly

venly peace, succeeds the late distracting images that floated in my tormented brain :—Something seems to tell me, I cannot have sinned past the power of infinite mercy to forgive ; — that,

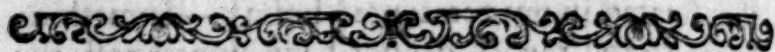
*True repentance never comes too late ;
As soon as born, she makes herself a shroud,
The weeping Mantle of a fleecy cloud ;
And swift as thought, her airy journey takes,
Her hand, heav'n's azure gate, with trembling
strikes ;
She tells her story in so sad a tone,
That angels start from bliss, and give a groan.
Repentance binds even th' Almighty's arms,
And with her sighs and prayers, those powerful
charms,
Of all his thunders his right-hand disarms ;
Her power can sentenc'd criminals reprieve,
Judgment arrest, and bid the rebel live.*

As I am too well convinced of your zeal and piety to doubt that any thing will prevent your seeing me, but the fears of my being incorrigible, I flatter myself what I have now said will make you entertain a more favourable opinion ;— it is you, and only such as you, shall henceforth be my companions, while I attend the awful summons to everlasting happiness or misery ; believe me, therefore, reverend and worthy sir,

The truly penitent,

PHILENIA.

EPISTLE



EPISTLE XLIX.

From EUPHROSINE to a lady, who was inconsolable through the fears that her husband's having lost his election for a seat in parliament, would hinder their coming to town so soon as she desired.

Dear madam,



AM sorry to find by yours, that Sir Thomas has lost his election, because I verily believe the want of him in parliament is a misfortune to the nation; but I cannot say that I think it ought to be a subject of mortification to you on any other account; and am surprized you should treat it as such.—For heaven's sake! What other advantage than the pleasure of serving his country, can a worthy honest man propose to himself, for all the fatigue he goes through in his attendance.—I am pretty confident he is entirely easy under the disappointment, and the reason you give for not being so yourself, seems altogether inconsistent with your former disposition. You tell me, *you are under most terrible apprehensions that you shall not come to town so soon as you expected,—that you are quite sick of the country, and all that is in it; and shall certainly die of the vapours, if confined there after Michaelmas is past.*—How different is this language from that you made use of, when you first went to take possession of your country seat; you then called it the garden of Eden, a bower of bliss, a fit receptacle for angels; the house, the gardens, the park, exceeded all that

that your most luxuriant fancy could have invented; you said, the society of the gentry was no less agreeable to you, than the place itself; — that you found every thing there that could compleat felicity; never wished to quit, and dreaded nothing so much as being obliged to exchange it for this noisy town, though but for a few months; you passed great part of the last winter there, and expressed no less a relish for the pleasures the country afforded in that season, than those of the summer: — Now, all at once, every thing is insipid, irksome; yet you ascribe no cause for this sudden disgust. — The air you acknowledge agrees with you, — every one continues to treat you with the same civilities with which at first you seemed so well pleased; — the change therefore must be in yourself, — but take care, my dear friend, how you give way to such vicissitudes of temper: — To like, and dislike, without being able to account wherefore we do so, is a disposition dangerous to be indulged, and you must pardon me when I say, a mind that can so soon be cloyed and weary of any one thing it has been vehemently fond of, may in time become sick of every thing. — Consider the consequence your friends will draw from this variable disposition: they will fear that there can be no firm dependance on the professions of esteem or love from a person of this humour. — I place so great a part of my happiness in those you have favoured me with, that you must not wonder if I labour all I can to keep you from entertaining a propensity, which may some time or other probably break those bonds of amity by which we have been so long united.

THAT you may not however imagine what I
urge

urge on this score, is entirely dictated by self-interest, I would fain persuade you to examine a little into your heart, to consider from whence this change of mind proceeds, and to what imprudent steps it may lead you. — I am very certain, if you do, you will find it no less to your own advantage, than that of your acquaintance, that you should return to your former way of thinking. — How happy is the situation of a person whose thoughts are continually roving, who wanders from one inclination to another, yet finds nothing satisfactory. — This changeable temper is the fountain of unhappiness. — They who cannot find ease under the best circumstances their fortune will admit of, would not be happy under any given circumstances whatsoever; their wishes of somewhat more, would make them insensible of the blessings they possess. — We should therefore study to be content, if it were only to enjoy what we have. — By proper means to enlarge our scheme of life, and gratify every reasonable wish, is laudable; otherwise it is inconsistent with that discretion which becomes your character, and constitutes the good wife. — Permit your friend to chide you on this subject: — Suffer not your husband's disappointment to be made more uneasy to him, by your abhorrence of the country where he chooses to reside. — You liked it, you extolled this retirement once. — Guard against this changeableness of temper I conjure you; — the distemper is but now beginning to creep on you; — exert all your reason and good sense to prevent it from taking too fast a hold; — be assured the same caprice which destroys your relish for the pleasures you were so lately charmed with, will, in a very short

short space of time, equally destroy it for all others successively; and then I see no difference between such a condition, and that of the most abject creature upon earth:—This perhaps may make you start; but pray, is not, to be incapable by our unhappy circumstances of *attaining* what are called the blessings of life, or to be capable by our own fullness of temper of *enjoying* them, when in our power, much the same thing, except that those unhappy persons of the *former* class deserve our *pity*, the *latter* our *reproach*! —Is not the miser, who starves amidst the heaps of gold, as much a wretch as he who starves for want of it?

BUT I am willing to hope the apprehensions I am under on this score are without foundation; that it was a momentary effect of the spleen, which alone occasioned your writing to me in the manner you did, and that by this time you are of sound mind, and laugh at all the trouble I have taken in this admonition.—If the cold fit, however, should return, you cannot be too much prepared to resist it, and therefore by way of antidote, enclose you a letter I received the other day from *Dione*, who, you will find, is far gone in the disease, and I should set her down among the number of *incurables*, if the sensibility she has of her condition did not give me some hopes;—since she does me the honour to take me for a *quack*, I talk in the language of one; but shall in my own proper sphere sincerely rejoice if my prescriptions have any effect on you, and that you do not betray the least symptom of a relapse in your next letter, which I assure you I shall impatiently expect, and am, madam,

Your real friend and humble servant,
EUPHROSINE



EPISTLE L.

[*Enclosed in the foregoing*]

From DIONE to EUPHROSINE, complaining of her want of relish for any of the pleasures of this life, and desiring she would give her a recipe to rectify the over great delicacy which occasioned it.

Dear creature,

 INTENDED to have waited on you last night, but was prevented by a croud of people who came in, and dragged me with them to take the air upon the river. — A barge of musick followed; they said the hands were good, and the tunes they played well chosen; every body at least seemed pleased with them, and equally delighted to see the beams of the declining sun play on the water; — but, good lord, what novelty was in all this! — how easy are some people charmed! — We landed, and just stepped into *Ranelagh* as we passed by, — all the world was there, both the great vulgar, and the small, as the inimitable *Congreve* says, but no new faces did I see; — the *rotundo* was as hot as an oven, so we did not stay a moment there. As we looked into the gardens some of the company were admiring how the trees were grown since last season, as if that were a thing to be wondered at: — We returned to our barge and sat cooped up till past ten, then went to a house on the *Surry* side, where an entertainment was provided for us; our musick landed

landed at the same time we did, played all the time we were at supper:—The moon shone very bright as we came back, and the firmament was clear; this afforded so much matter of pleasure to some among us, that I was two or three times tempted to ask them if this was the first fine night they had ever seen in their lives. My complaisance, however, kept me silent on that head, but I could not forbear smiling within myself at their stupidity.

BUT notwithstanding the contempt I have for people of this turn of mind, I envy the happiness they enjoy:—I remember, that when I was very young, and was allowed the diversions of the town but seldom, I was transported with every thing I saw; now, I can find no one thing capable of giving me the least pleasure; the finest airs in an opera only make my head ache;—comedy is insipid, and tragedy gives me the spleen;—the formalities of the drawing-room fatigue me;—dancing is too robust;—cards I am weary of after three deals; in the *mall* I am either poisoned with ill breaths, or suffocated with perfumes;—a masquerade is detestable:—In fine, all those things which I see others run mad after, are to me not only tasteless, but disagreeable, and I begin to think the world a sad place, and that *Lucretius* had a just notion of it, when he says,

*Where we but tread one dull perpetual round,
Never strike out but beat the former ground,
And the same nauseous joys in the same track
are found.*

And yet one must live here, heaven knows
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how long, perhaps till we grow so old and ugly that our own lap-dogs will be frightened at us. If one could therefore bring ones self to like a little what falls in one's way, it would be better;—but I have the misfortune, I may justly call it so, since I came to any judgment of things, to see too plainly into the worthlessness of them, and cannot help being chagrined at what the folly of mankind presents as objects of delight;—nay, to despise and nauseate them, the more because I see others pleased with them. In fine, my dear, it is an over delicacy of taste, which will not suffer me to take any satisfaction in those diversions, amusements, or whatever they are called, which so much engross the attention of most of my acquaintance.—I wish it were otherwise, and unless there were something more to entertain me, than any thing I can find; that I had ideas of pleasure less nice and refined; for as it is, I am perfectly sick of my being, and ready to accuse Providence of injustice for placing me in an orb to which I have a nature so little adapted.

You have the character of a woman of wit, my dear, and no body can be more ready to subscribe to that opinion than myself; yet I have seen you highly diverted with objects insipid to me, and smiling at circumstances and events which made me miserable.—For heaven's sake, how do you preserve that eternal gaiety amidst so many scenes of perplexity!—They say, there are cures for all diseases of the body, why not of the mind also? If there be a recipe, you must infallibly be mistress of it, and it would be charity in you to communicate it to one, who would fain regulate a nicety, so destructive of all the

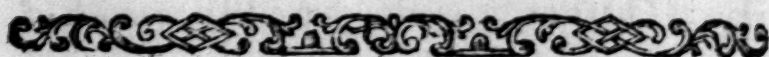
the pleasures of life. — You have been as many years as I have in the world, have seen as much of its variety, yet can contentedly run them all over and over again, and seem untired, unsatiated with them: — The opera, the play, the park, the country, the town, afford you, in their turns, a perpetual round of satisfactory amusements; could I have a relish for any one of them, I should not be so unhappy as I am: — I assure you, I am passionately desirous of reforming this disposition; I never am told of any new pleasure, without running to partake of it, and still flatter myself that I shall find something there, capable of entertaining me,

*For still I think an absent blessing best,
Which cloy, and is no blessing when possess.*

As I would therefore be glad to exchange all my delicacy, for a part of your chearfulness and good humour, I beg you will put me in a way of taking things as I find them, and not to be continually seeking after those that are not to be found in nature: — Teach me how I may render solitude agreeable, and how to forbear being sick of all the company I come into; in a word, how I may be a little more like other people, for at present I can join with the world in no one thing but being, my dear *Euphrosine*,

Your admirer and friend,

DIONE.



EPISTLE LI.

*From ASTREA to her uncle, who had blamed her
for an excess of liberality.*

SIR,

 I SHOULD be extremely sorry and ashamed to have given the least cause for an accusation of profuseness, on any other score than that you are pleased to mention; or even on this, if the liberalities you condemn with so much severity, were of any prejudice to those whom I know it is my duty to have the first in my thoughts: But, Sir, I beg you will inform me if any such stand in need of my assistance, for I protest I know of none that do; and if once made sensible there are such persons, they may be certain of receiving all the relief that my reason tells me their circumstances require, or my ability can bestow; but till I am convinced there are wants among my own family, permit me I beseech you to search out those of others.—The Munificent Dispenser of all blessings has given a more than sufficiency for the support of his creatures, and if I happen to be posselt of a greater share of the goods of fortune than many others are, am I, like the miser, to hoard up wealth, while those, who by nature have an equal title, pine for my superfluity! —Are we not all born with the same appetites? Are not the poorest wretches, who beg my charity, endued with the same faculties of tasting and smelling as myself? —Are they not
equally

equally susceptible of cold and hunger? And has not the prisoner as just a sense of the sweets of liberty, as I can have? In fine, are they not, however distressed and abject, born citizens of the world, and consequently have a right to find subsistence in it?

BUT you say, Sir, that I am so fond of squandering my income, as you term it, that I take pains to hunt after people to receive it, without waiting till my bounty is petitioned for:—This is certainly true, for why should I give a shock, where I mean to confer an obligation?—Those who do good actions after much solicitation, and merely because they are teized into them, destroy all the merit of the deed, both in the eye of heaven, and those to whom the long-clenched hand at last is open:—Besides, I have often observed, that they who most deserve our compassion, are the least capable of asking it; and what a pleasure is it to unveil the concealed scenes of misery, and contribute as much as is in our power to make the unhappy sufferer less sensible of the injustice of fortune! What joy can an affluence of wealth bestow, which can come in any degree of comparison with that, which flows from drawing modest merit out of that obscurity, which poverty is sure to cloud it with?—What satisfaction so refined and permanent as to surprize a worth person into happiness, and give a new life of gladness to expiring hope?

I DO assure you, Sir, I take all the care I can to confer the small favours in my power, on such who not only appear to me in the greatest necessity, but also on such, who, on account of their good qualities, are most deserving of my

regard:—Those whom heaven has distinguished by any extraordinary talents, have an undoubted title to the love and respect of their fellow-mortals; and how is it possible either to love or respect sincerely, without giving such marks of it as their circumstances most require.

THE apprehension Mr. **** tells me you are under, of my being reduced, by my liberalities to others, to stand in need of support myself one day, is very obliging, as I hope this concern rather proceeds from a parental tenderness than any other motive, and I am therefore obliged in gratitude to remove these fears, by assuring you, that I have too much justice in my nature to rob the person who comes after me of any part of his birth-right.—My steward can inform you, I have neither sold nor mortgaged a single acre of my lands, and content myself with disposing the annual rents of them in such a manner as is most pleasing to myself.—I live no way beneath my rank; my house, my equipage, my table, my apparel, are all such as might be expected from a woman of the fortune I am known to enjoy, but then I am an oeconomist in these articles:—I take care to have enough, and not too much of any thing; and buying with ready money, am sure of neither being imposed on, nor ill served by my tradesmen: But, Sir, the method I take for enabling me to do those acts of charity you have been told of, is by avoiding all expensive pleasure: By never going to court, I save at least three birth-day suits in a year; and the sums I must submit to the chance of losing or being cheated of, if I were a lover of gaming, supply the necessities of many a person in distress.—By this method I aspire at being in the place
of

of Providence to them, and *keep myself unspotted from the world.*

I NEVER can be brought to think we are born for ourselves: Not only revealed religion, but morality, and the laws of society, enjoin a mutual good-will to each other, and a sympathizing with the several wants, to which human nature is liable: Some stand in need of our purse; some of our advice; some to be instructed in those things which a narrow education has denied them; and none certainly can pretend to say, that all these acts of benevolence are not the duty of every one to whom God has given the power, as a very excellent living poet tells us,

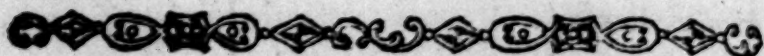
All avarice but that of time is sin.

YET some people contrive to lavish both time and money too, in ways which, without being of service to others, bring on themselves reproach, and destruction of health, reputation, peace of mind, and whatever ought to be dear and valuable in this world, if not their hopes of eternal happiness in the next.

I FLATTER myself, Sir, the account I have given you, will convince you I am no prodigal, nor have any way forfeited the claim my birth-right gives me to your affection, being desirous of nothing more than to prove myself, with the most dutiful respect and veneration,

Your most obedient neice,

ASTREA.



EPISTLE LII.

From HELLARIA to CLIO, accusing herself of the want of power to think so seriously as she imagined she ought to do on death.

My dear CLIO,



AMONG all the self-evident contradictions in human nature, there is nothing so amazing as the manner in which we treat death:—We are in continual apprehensions for our sick friends, yet never reflect how very possible it is we may be snatched away before them.—We lament over them when dead, but remember not that we may not survive their funerals. In fine, we behave as if we thought every one mortal but ourselves:—Nor are we lulled in this security only while youth continues, the stupefaction remains on us even to extreme old age, and people of ninety-nine receives the fiat of their dissolution with no less surprize than terror.—Yet that we all must die one time or other is a truth obvious to the most ignorant, as well as most knowing; neither one nor the other, however, seem to think of it as might be expected; and it is this unacquaintance with our fate, which renders it so dreadful on a near approach.—I would fain methinks familiarize myself with the king of terrors, in order to receive him with less shock:—I endeavour every night to reflect that the sleep I am going to take may be my last, and when I awake in the morning, that numbers as young and healthy as myself will never see the setting

setting sun: That I cannot be assured I may not be one of them; yet, in spite of all I can do, these serious thoughts vanish like a vapour, are immediately lost amidst a crowd of others, and, as *Shakespear* says,

Dissolv'd, and gone beyond the clouds.

SOME alterations in my house, my furniture, my cloaths, my jewels, come into my head, and though I know not but I may be past the use of them *to-day*, am contriving what I will have done *to-morrow*.

LORD! of what use is all our boasted reason, when it will not enable one to command one's own thoughts!—I haunt the tombs in *Westminster* abbey, as assiduously as if I were already a ghost, and condemned to the mortification of viewing the wretched remains of my former self:—There I examine what the marble tells me of the gay and great, and answer with the poet, the inscriptions I see on it,

*Here lies th' illustrious,—false marble, where?
Nothing but rottenness and dust is there.*

YET I no sooner quit this awful scene, than some visit yet unreturned comes across my thoughts:—I direct my chair thither in a great hurry, and perhaps agree to make one in a party of pleasure, which engrosses the best part of the night.

A FEW days ago, whether through the heat of the weather, or drinking my hyson-tea more strong than ordinary, or I know not to what

cause to impute it, I was seized with a sudden swimming in my head, a violent palpitation of my heart, and a strange confusion through every part:—I thought myself dying, and the horrors that I felt in that apprehension are not to be conceived, much less described; yet the fit went off, and with it all my terrors. I was engaged that same evening to the masquerade, and all that was past was less remembered than a dream:—Is not this unaccountable, my dear *Clio*, that what is so necessary to be thought on, in spite of all our efforts, flies from us, and is not to be brought back upon our minds without the interposition of some accident unsought by us?—I should not have been just now in the humour I am, but wanting something to amuse me, I took up *Otway's Horace*, and happened to open the book, where the first thing that struck my eyes was,

*Though we each day with cost repair,
Death mocks our greatest skill, and utmost care;
Nor loves the fair, nor fears the strong,
And they that live the longest, die but young.*

You cannot imagine how much this sudden and unexpected memento has struck me:—I shudder,—I tremble as if the inevitable stroke were already given, and I were this instant quitting all the dear delights of life, and launching into a world unknown:—The impression is indeed very strong, but yet I will not pretend to say how long it will last with me, because on a thousand occasions I have felt the same, and been as often diverted from it on the most trivial object intervening.

WOULD

WOULD to heaven it were in my power either not to think of death at all, or that I could accustom myself to think so much of it, as to regard it with the same indifference I do other things common to nature:—I know it is no less so than any of them; but the world, and the attachments I have to it, will not suffer me to reap the least benefit from this knowledge; I easily perceive I shall never be able to conquer the horrors I feel at the thoughts of being no more, and that I shall make a very foolish figure in my last moments,—what must be, however will be,—till then, believe me,

My dear *Clio*, sincerely yours,
HILLARIA.



EPISTLE LIII.

[*The Answer.*]

From *CLIO* to *HILLARIA*, condemning the manner in which she reflected on death, and attempting to direct her to a method more likely to make the thoughts of it less alarming.

My dear *HILLARIA*,

 DOUBT not, but as you yourself imagined, you are by this time in a humour quite different from that in which you wrote to me; however, as you are so desirous of indulging the thoughts of mortality, this will be far from driving them out of your head:—I would have you think on death, but not in the manner you seem to do;

for that is not the way ever to render his approach less formidable; and you would much sooner lose your senses in the apprehension, than be any part of his terrors. — To be continually meditating on death, *meerly* as *death*, would be not to *enjoy life*, and not only deprive us of all the blessings annexed to it, but also render us incapable of answering the ends for which it was given: — Love and friendship would be extinct; we should become unsociable gloomy creatures, and go mopeing about the world, as actually lost to it, as if already shut up in a vault: — I would, therefore, have you, my dear *Hillaria*, to look beyond the grave; and bend your mind not on *the journey*, but the *stage* to which it will conduct you; the thoughts of a glorious immortality will render the way thither, rather pleasing than the contrary, even though the passage should happen to be a little rugged.

NATURE, it is certain, has implanted in us a horror at the thoughts of dissolution, otherwise there are some sort of calamities to be found in the world, which might tempt those who labour under them, to take improper methods for flying from it before their time, and impiously anticipate the will of heaven. That this natural timidity is difficult to be surmounted, I also own; but as we are told from an unerring mouth, that *by faith we might remove mountains*, so a strong faith in the blessings decreed for us hereafter, will certainly remove all those superstitious apprehensions, which so much distract the brain, and make cowards of us all. — A consciousness of having lived in the practice of moral virtue, and a steady adherence to the precepts of religion, as far as is consistent with the frailties of human nature,

nature, ought to assure us we have nothing to fear, and every thing to hope in the regions of futurity.

THE time allotted for our abode on earth is so extremely short, even to those who live the longest, that we should be very much our own enemies, not to make the most of it we can, rather than sullenly deny ourselves the good things it presents, because we know we must one day part with them: — That would be like forbearing to gather a fine flower because its fragrant freshness will decay upon our bosoms. It certainly was intended we should indulge our senses, as far as virtue and prudence permit, with the trifles this world affords: — Trifles they are indeed, but such as are adapted to our passions and inclinations, and such as, till we become more refined and spiritual, we should be miserable in the want of.

GIVE over, therefore, my dear *Hillaria*, frequenting tombs, and the reliques of the deceased; — repine not that you must one day be as they are; but follow *Martial's* counsel;

*Be satisfy'd, and pleas'd with what thou art:
Act chearfully and well th' allotted part;
Enjoy the present hour, be thankful for the past,
And neither fear, nor wish th' approaches of the last.*

I HAVE no notion that the *stoicks* are more virtuous than other people, or that the *fryars* of the order of *la Trappe*, who spend three parts of their time in digging their own graves, are better prepared to go into them, than those who never once think in what place, or in what manner, they shall be buried. I

I HOPE you will not accuse me of treating so serious a subject with an unbecoming levity: Whenever I reflect on the tremendous moment, I am struck with the most reverential awe for that Supreme Being of beings, who alone can enable me to sustain it without terror, and who has put it into my own power, to make it the crisis of everlasting joy or sorrow.

WE are born heirs of eternity, and should consider that the day of our death will be the day of our coming at age to take possession of that patrimony bequeathed to us, by him who redeemed the mortgage by his precious blood. A patrimony stored with an immense profusion of unconceivable delights!—Pleasures without the least alloy!—Treasures which never can diminish!

*Where when a thousand, thousand years are gone,
Our bliss is still the same, and still to be begun.*

THESE contemplations will divest death of the horrors he appears in to a mind unarm'd with innocence, and undirected by reason: As I am confident the former has been the constant companion of your life, it only requires you should exert the latter to make you less disturb'd at the thoughts of your own mortality, than of those whose friendship you would lament the loss of on earth. I am with the utmost sincerity,

Dear *Hillaria*,

Yours affectionately,

CLIO.

EPISTLE



EPISTLE LIV.

*From a lady in the country, to her friend in town;
given her an account of a very odd accident, that
had happened in her family, and the concern she
was in upon it.*

Dear CLARINDA,



HAD answered your obliging letter some posts sooner, but for an odd adventure which for a time engrossed my whole attention, and indeed still employs great part of it:—You may remember that in one of my former, I gave you an account that my woman, who had lived so long with me, had at last exchanged a mistress for a master, and was married to a neighbouring farmer, and that in her place I had taken a young girl of the steward's recommending, with whom I had no fault to find, but her being so perfectly well-bred, genteel, and accomplished in every thing, that I knew not how to treat her as a servant, or to receive from her the offices of one: As I wrote however at that time but slightly concerning her, I must now inform you, that I every day perceiv'd some new and amiable qualifications in her; and though she behaved herself toward me with a humility even below her station, I could never look upon her without seeing something, which made me imagine she had been more accustomed to command than obey.—I asked her several questions concerning her parents, and with whom she had been educated; all which I could

could perceive she would gladly have been excused from answering, yet told me in the whole, that she had been left an orphan very young, and had received what little she was mistress of, from a friend of her father's, who was also dead: —As I was a little surprized to find, in one of the rank she pretended, accomplishments such as are seldom bestowed but on persons in high life, I examined the steward how he became acquainted with her; on which, he freely confessed she came quite a stranger to his house, had desired leave to board there, which his wife, being charmed with her behaviour at first sight, had prevailed on him to grant: —He added, that after having been with them about two months, she told them she was a friendless young creature, and could not afford to maintain herself in the manner she at present lived, for any length of time, and begged they would as soon as opportunity offered recommend her to a service; therefore, said he, *as your ladyship was destitute of a person to attend you, and my wife assuring me she was extremely well qualified for that purpose, I ventured to prefer her, and hope she has done nothing to forfeit the good opinion her behaviour, while with us, gave me of her.* — I assured him so far from it, that it was only the imagination that she was born to something, beyond what she was willing to reveal, that had excited this curiosity in me.

INDEED, my dear *Clarinda*, I must own to you, that I felt an uncommon concern for this young creature; from her first coming to me, I had been perfectly certain in my own mind, that some extraordinary accident had reduced her to the condition of a servant; but these conjectures

jectures were entirely confirmed, when on the talk of my coming to *London*, as you know I intended, but was disappointed, she entreated to be left behind, saying, that as there must be a person to take care of the house during my absence, nobody would more faithfully discharge that trust, and she would much rather undertake it, than go to a place which she pretended did not agree with her health; as I doubted not but the true reason of this request was to avoid the pain it would give her to be seen by any one who might have known her in a different station, I complied with it, not without feeling a very great addition to the pity I before had been inspired with on her account.

My journey to *London*, however, being put off, I could perceive she was extremely rejoiced at it; having been under some apprehensions, as she afterwards told me, that I might change my mind on reflection, and think the charge she requested too weighty to be entrusted to one of her years, and the little experience I had of her; and as she was determined never to see *London* more, she should then be obliged to quit my service, which you will see by the sequel would have been a very great mortification to her.

THE news of Sir *John*'s having happily terminated his vexatious chancery suit, the congratulatory letters of my friends upon it, and the expectations of soon seeing a husband who had been absent from me for near five months, put out of my head, however, for a time, all thoughts of *Rosinda*, for so the unfortunate young person I have all this time been speaking of, is called.

LAST

LAST week he arrived to my inexpressible satisfaction, as you may believe, and brought with him a gentleman whom I had never seen before, but one with whom he had contracted a very great intimacy during his stay in *London*, and had persuaded to accompany him, as he afterwards told me, in order to alleviate a melancholly which indeed it was easy to perceive, even at the first sight, hung heavy on his heart. I was too much taken up with my own affairs to enquire into those of a stranger, nor did Sir *John* mention any thing farther of the guest he introduced, than that he was a man of family and fortune, and every way worthy of the civilities he desired I would treat him with.

I HAD not, indeed, time to ask many questions, for the next morning after their arrival, Sir *John* brought him into my dressing-room; — I was at my toilet, *Rosinda* was waiting; after paying me the compliments of the time of day, he was about to sit down, when turning his head to that side of the room where *Rosinda* was standing, their eyes met. *Rosinda!* cried he, in an extasy of surprize and joy, *Rosinda!* — by what miracle do I find you here, after having, with unwearied love, sought you so long in vain?

WITH these words he rather flew than ran cross the room, thinking to take her in his arms, but the speed he made was yet too slow to prevent her from falling on the floor; — the various agitations that all at once invaded her tender heart (and for which you will hereafter find she had but too much cause) overwhelmed her spirits, and threw her into a swoon. — The agonies he was in to see her thus, had somewhat the

the air of desperation in them. — *Has heaven mocked me with the shadow of happiness, — shewed me the adorable Rosinda only to snatch her from me in the instant of my joy at finding her!* said he, and a thousand other things, which shewed the extremest violence of grief and passion.

It was some time before all our endeavours could bring her to herself; — but as soon as she was so, *O why, Philemon, cried she, why, O too generous man! this vast profusion of love and fondness for a wretch unworthy of your least regard? — I told you I had mighty reasons for flying for ever from you and all the world; — could you not believe me? — Must you pursue me here, and drive me from the asylum my kinder fate vouchsafed me?*

It would be too tedious to relate what passed between them, nor, indeed, would my memory permit me to do it; so I shall only say, that on his side all was love and tenderness, on her's grief mixed with a kind of horror. Both Sir John and myself were in too much consternation to be able to say one word to either of them, till she, turning her eyes upon me, begged pardon for the confusion she had occasioned, and permission to retire, finding herself, she said, extremely ill. — I then called some of the other servants to attend her to her chamber, and gave orders that she should be waited upon as myself, have every thing brought to her as she desired, and not be left alone one moment, not knowing to what dreadful lengths the emotions she appeared to be in, might possibly transport her.

We then endeavoured to comfort *Philemon*, who had been so struck with her behaviour toward

ward him, and the expressions she made use of in recovering from her swoon, that he appeared more like a statue than a living man :—The answers he gave us at first were a little incoherent, yet discovered there was some very great mystery in the affair ;—the bottom of which he himself was ignorant of. When we asked him any thing concerning *Rosinda*, he begged of us to inform him how she came hither.—In fine, the discourse that passed between us for some minutes, seemed rather the children's play of *cross-questions*, than the conversation of serious people ;—at last however we began to understand each other better : He found it was not in our power to satisfy his curiosity with what he wanted chiefly to know, the motive of *Rosinda's* behaviour ; and after I had related in what manner she came to my house, he recovered temper enough to oblige me with her history, from the beginning of her life to that unhappy time, in which she became lost to every one who had any knowledge of her.

HE told us she was the daughter of a gentleman, whose extraction was of the first rank among the gentry, and allied to several of the nobility, but on the account of some misfortunes in his family, had been obliged to mortgage his estate pretty deeply, so that at his decease *Rosinda*, then but seven years old, and a brother, yet younger than herself, were left in a very indifferent condition ; his last words, however, bequeathing them and the care of their affairs to the husband of his wife's sister, they were taken into their house, and found little want of their parents, through the extraordinary tenderness of both uncle and aunt.—When the
boy

boy arrived at a proper age, he was sent to *Eton* school, in order to be qualified for *Oxford*; and *Rosinda* had masters to instruct her at home, in all the useful and polite accomplishments of her sex.

The first time, said he, with a deep sigh, that I saw Rosinda, was at the opera, she was then about fifteen, and appeared so beautiful, that from that instant I conceived a passion for her, which can never end but with my life:—A gentleman, who happened to be with me, knew her, he gave me the particulars concerning her family and affairs as I have related them to you, and on my entreating that favour of him, introduced me the next day to her uncle and aunt:—This second sight of the amiable Rosinda confirmed those sentiments which the first had inspired me with.—I indulged this inclination the more, as I imagined I had no obstacles to struggle with;—the extreme youth of my charmer almost assuring me, her heart was not yet engaged, and the uncertainty of her fortune flattering me with the hopes that the offer I should make of mine would be acceptable.—I had not therefore made many visits before I declared to the uncle and aunt the desire I had of an alliance with their family; they received my proposal with a great deal of satisfaction, and I had no reason to repine at the reception the young lady gave to my first professions. In fine, continued he, the courtship went on as successfully as my most sanguine wishes had made me hope.—In Rosinda's artless glances, I read her heart was no enemy to my suit, long before she could prevail with her tongue to give a sanction to it; but, when at last she owned her love, said, she would never be but mine, with what enchanting softness was the sweet confession made! Nothing now seemed wanting to compleat my happiness, when
all

all at once the uncle told me, he could not think of disposing of his niece without a settlement answerable to her birth;—that she might possibly, when the estate was cleared, have a fortune to demand it, and that I must either attend that event, or assign a considerable part of my annual rents over to her.—To this I immediately assented, and should have done so, had his demands been the whole I was possess of:—Lawyers were employed to draw up the writings in the manner he proposed, and in the mean time I saw Rosinda every day, and was happy.

BUT now, said he, after a pause, when I thought my bliss certain, when I would not have thanked fate for a security of it, were all my glorious expectations dashed, and all my promised heaven of joy turned to a real hell of torments. For two days had I been denied admittance to Rosinda, on account of indisposition, as both the uncle and the aunt pretended, yet I thought I saw something in the looks of both, especially the former, which made me suspect the reality of what was told me, and gave me a kind of prescience of my approaching misfortune.—I repelled such apprehensions, however, as much as it was in my power, by reflecting how little reason there was for breaking off on their side, till the third morning, pretty early, my footman delivered a letter to me, which had been left by a porter.—I knew the hand to be Rosinda's; and opened it with an agitation not to be expressed.

IN speaking this he took a paper out of his pocket, and presented it to me to read,—saying, *That, madam, is the dreadful mandate.*—No wonder it indeed alarmed him, since it seemed to contain, with the most cruel intelligence a lover could receive, an enigma also no less perplexing;

plexing; but I will transcribe you the contents.

“ Most worthy and ever dear *Philemon*,

“ An irremediable accident tears me for ever
“ from you, and from all my hopes of happiness on earth; but though we must see each other no more, my heart would not suffer me to leave you without a last adieu. The remembrance of your affection will always be dear to me, but as it is now impossible for me to reap the benefit of it, beg you will transfer it to some more worthy object;—forbear any fruitless enquiries either into the motives of this sudden change, or the place of my retirement;—both will be alike impenetrable. Think of me as a thing that *was*, but *is* no more, for such to the whole world must be

“ The lost ROSINDA”.

THE tender *Philemon* could not hear me read this, which I did aloud that Sir *John* might be partaker of it, without bursting into a flood of tears, but when he had a little recovered himself, resumed the narrative he had begun in these, or the like terms.

I will not, said he, trouble you with any repetition of the extravagances I committed in the first emotions of my despair; my suspicions that I had been denied seeing her for some days past through some motive to which her uncle and aunt were privy, now returned, and I flew directly to their house, and began to upbraid them, as if certain they had not dealt fairly by me; but the grief I found them both in, and the confusion which appeared in the faces of
the

the servants, soon convinced me they had no share in her elopement.

As soon as they found me capable of listening to reason, they told me she had been extremely melancholly for two days past, had scarce taken any refreshment, and intreated they would suffer nobody to be admitted to her, and mentioned myself in particular. — Her aunt added, that fearing her brain was disordered, she had designed to apply to a physician for advice, but that her suddenly going away before any of the family were stirring, had filled her with apprehensions yet more alarming.

After some little reflections, which were natural to the occasion, pursued he, her uncle said, he would go in search of her without resting till she was found. I made it my request to accompany him, which he willingly granting, we took such measures as nothing can be more amazing than that they did not succeed. — Yet in spite of all our endeavours we were not able to procure the least intelligence: — What event will attend my meeting with her here, heaven and herself only can determine; yet sure, if I am to be unhappy, she will at least be prevailed upon to let me know wherefore I am so, and not suffer me to linger out my life in an uncertainty more cruel than death.

It is impossible, my dear *Clarinda*, to express to you, how much I was affected with this story. — The generosity, the love, the constancy which *Philemon* had given such testimony of, throughout the whole, excited my admiration and esteem; I joined all my endeavours to those of *Sir John's* to console him under the affliction he sustained, and to perswade him into a belief, that

that heaven had not so unexpectedly restored him his *Rosinda*, without designing to make him happy with her, notwithstanding the uneasiness she had shewn in meeting with him:—After some discourse on this head, I left him with Sir *John*, and went to her chamber, not doubting but I should obtain from her an explanation of this mysterious affair, but I soon found the task more difficult than I could have imagined: A sullen grief had seized upon her spirits, speaking seemed painful to her, and though she forced herself to make those acknowledgments to me she thought my civilities demanded, yet I easily perceived she would have been better pleased to have been left alone; and when I mentioned any thing concerning *Philemon*, and expressed some impatience to be let into her reasons for avoiding a gentleman who so well deserved her affection, she answered, *It was her fate: That she was compelled to act in the manner she had done, by an unavoidable necessity;—begged, that as my goodness had extended itself so far, that I would carry it farther still, and not suffer him to come into her presence; and that I would forgive her refusing to declare the motive of her shunning him, it being a secret she was resolved should die with her.*

THIS is all I have hitherto been able to get from her, but though I cannot say but this obstinacy a little piques me, yet in compassion to *Philemon*, I still continue my efforts, but though four days have now elapsed since the accident of their meeting, I am as far from knowing the sentiments of *Rosinda*, as I was the first moment it happened;—she is extremely indisposed, as it is not to be expected she should be otherwise, considering the agitations she sustains.—*Phile-*

mon between love and despair is almost distracted, and I do assure you I have full employment on my hands between them both.—How this business will end, I cannot foresee;—I am in continual apprehensions of some fatal consequence, and as I know you take an interest in every thing that gives me pain or pleasure, I could not forbear communicating this story to you; you may also depend that if I am fortunate enough to obtain any *eclaircissement*, I shall not fail gratifying the curiosity this must have raised in you, with an immediate account,—till when I am, my dear *Clarinda*,

Yours sincerely,

FLORELLA.



EPISTLE LV.

*From ISABINDA to ELVIRA, with a copy of verses on her sister's marriage with the E. of ****, and presented to the bride and bridegroom the morning of their wedding.*

My dear ELVIRA,

I*N* MIDST the incessant hurry of which *C**** ball* has been the scene for ten whole days, I might say nights too, I just snatched time to make my own and sister's acknowledgments for the favour of your last, and to let you know you may expect an answer from herself the first composed moment she is mistress of;—but when that will be, is utterly impossible to guess; for the bells, the drums, the trumpets, the acclamations of the populace,

populace, and all the *Babel-like* confusion of rejoycings without doors, and the visits, balls, and feasts within, are as yet the very same as the first day *hymen* lighted the nuptial torch:— To shew you however that we do not quite forget our absent friends, this brings you a garter, and with it an *epithalamium*, which, knowing you are a lover of poetry, I would needs transcribe.—It was wrote by a country *bard*, and presented to the bride and bridegroom as they entered the porch of the church.

*Verses on the marriage of the right honourable the
E. of **** with the honourable miss ****.*

“ When the vast empire of the world began,
“ And, for its monarch, God appointed man;
“ To make him worthy of the sov’reign sway,
“ Into the noble frame he shot a ray
“ Of his own essence, th’ immortal soul,
“ To know, t’ instruct, and regulate the whole!
“ He gave him *will*, with *reason* for a guide,
“ To stem the passions at their raging tide.
“ Thus fraught with wisdom, and to good
“ propense,
“ He felt no wish but in a virtuous sense.
“ Half angel for a time, he all things knew,
“ And heav’n itself lay open to his view.

“ But vice and folly soon dabas’d the kind,
“ In shape imperfect, more deform’d in mind.
“ Each rolling age still frailer than the past,
“ Till sickly nature seem’d to breathe her last.
“ So different from at first mankind became,
“ As if a *dæmon* brood usurp’d the name.

" To rectify this general decay,
 " And form a race of more distinguish'd clay,
 " The great creator his unerring hand
 " Again employ'd, strait rise at his command
 " Two wonders, soul'd alike, with sex distinct,
 " In one to center when more closely link'd.
 " From a long line of *british* peers springs forth
 " The noble youth more rich in native worth,
 " Than all the blaze of heraldry e'er knew,
 " Tho' his great name with time's first æra grew.
 " Each manly charm his virtue more endears,
 " In *Celia's* form a brighter *Eve* appears.
 " For him unnumber'd nymphs in secret sigh'd,
 " For her the noblest youths despair'd and dy'd.
 " In vain, alas, are all the arts of love,
 " When sympathetic ardor fails to move.
 " Bodies of different nature ne'er unite;
 " For as fell darkness disappears at light;
 " As pure drawn oil with water will not blend,
 " Nor jarring atoms to each other tend;
 " So must agreeing spirits friendly meet,
 " To make the blissful harmony compleat.
 " Each but in theory felt the flame, before
 " They knew to be ador'd, but not t' adore.
 " At last the lucky moment brings to light,
 " A mutual passion, at the mutual sight:
 " Like th' inward workings of a soul inspir'd,
 " It acts in both, and both at once are fir'd.

" Lo! *hymen*, now to crown the happy pair,
 " Bids them for marriage sacred rites prepare:
 " With lighted torch, the emblem of a flame
 " Which burns with purity, and still the same,
 " The deity attends, the knot now tyed,
 " Hail to the bridegroom and the beauteous bride!
 " Hence innocence renews her ancient date,
 " And every offspring brings a purer state:
 " The

- “ The destin’d blessings future time shall see,
“ And rules prescribe for late posterity.
“ ’Tis not in me t’ unfold the coming bliss,
“ But all delights to sum up in a wish.
“ Peace is in plenty, plenty is in peace,
“ May both be added, and ne’er know decrease.

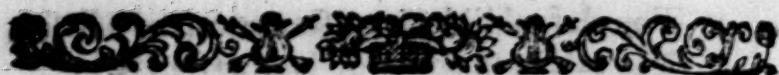
I HAVE a thousand things to tell you; but fresh company are come in, and I have already had three summons at my chamber door, so can only say, that I see so much of the noise and nonsense of a public wedding, that if ever I venture to give up my liberty, I am resolved to steal in at the back gate of a church, in a part of the town where they have too much business of their own to mind that of others. As soon as the parson has done his office, and when we are tack’d together, make my man run away with me to some obscure village, pass there for people that have been married a long time, stay away from all my acquaintance till the talk of my marriage is grown stale, and I shall be accustomed enough to wedlock, not to blush and look silly on the congratulations and other stuff one is ordinarily plagued with on that occasion, till when, which depend upon it will be a long while, I am, my dear *Elvira*,

Yours &c.

ISABINDA.



End of the FOURTH BOOK.



EPISTLES.

BOOK V.

EPITILE LVI.

*From AMINTA to MIRA, given her an account
of the treachery of her friend and lover, and the
manner in which she resents it.*

Dear madam,



HAVE strange things to tell you;
—*Palamede* is married, *Narcissa* is
married,—and, could you ever have
imagined it, to each other!—Yes,
that protesting dying lover who lived
but in the hopes of being one day mine,—that
lover for whose sake I have refused so many no-
ble matches, and suffered all that the provoked
authority of my parents could inflict,—that
friend too,—that constant companion,—that
partaker of my pleasures and confident of all my
tender follies,—these two,—this lover so adored,
—this friend so valued,—have doubtless long
been in a league to impose upon my fond believ-
ing heart, and now it is sure, have sealed, irre-
vocably

vocably sealed, the treacherous compact.—O!
two such,—change but the names, I may say
with *Mark Antony* in the play :

——— *Two, two such!*

*O! there's no further name! two such to me!
To me, who lock'd my soul within their breasts,
Had no desire, no joy, no life, but them:
Had all the globe been mine, I'd give it them
In dowry with my heart — I had no use,
No fruit of aught but them — O Palamede?
O Narcissa! how could you betray
This tender heart, which with an infant fondness,
Lay lull'd between your bosoms.*

METHINKS I see the surprize you are in at
finding such deceit and ingratitude in persons of
their birth and education :—It is indeed strange,
but I have something more wonderful yet behind ;
which is, that I bear the perfidy of both without
pain, or without resentment.—While I believed
them what they seemed, I could have given up my
life for either ; but the unparalleled baseness of their
natures now discovered, renders them equally be-
neath my anger, as unworthy of my love.—I look
upon it as the peculiar mercy of Divine Providence
to me, to have been prevented, though against
my will, from falling into the hands of a man of
so inconstant and variable a disposition as *Pala-
mede*, and for shewing me, how little dependance
there is on a woman who has not the principles
of religion for her guide, which you, madam,
very well know *Narcissa* was but too defective
in. I pity from my heart the ungenerous pair,
and sincerely lament, that two persons, so well
versed in all the accomplishments which attract
public admiration, should be wholly wanting in

those qualifications which make the happiness of private life.

I MUST own I had so little suspicion there could be such baseness in the world, much less in those whom partial inclination had made so dear to me, that I looked on the report of this wedding to be only one of those many artifices had been made use of, to separate my *mind* from *Palamede*, as force and confinement had done my *person*,—and though I had reason to believe my mother incapable of uttering a falsehood, yet I imagined that in this she had either been imposed upon herself, or been prevailed upon by my father to join in a deception they both thought necessary to alienate my affections from a man to whom they were so averse.

BUT, madam, the day before yesterday, which it seems was the third after the consummation of their nuptials, two letters were delivered to me,—the characters I well knew to be those of *Palamede* and *Narcissa*, and, whatever were the contents, I had not a possibility of doubting whether dictated by themselves:—As I believe they will appear pretty extraordinary, I have taken the liberty to transcribe them, with a faithful copy of the answer I gave.

TO AMINTA.

“ *Madam.*

“ THE continual disquiets of an unsuccessful,
 “ and indeed hopeless passion, my father’s po-
 “ sitive commands, and the many reasons I had
 “ for settling myself in the world, have made
 “ me at last resolve to yield to the severe ne-
 “ cessity

" necessity of tearing from my heart, all that once
 " made its pleasure:—To be easy in life, we
 " must comply with circumstances, and as they
 " happen to vary, vary our inclinations also:—
 " The good sense I know you are mistress of,
 " makes me hope all remembrance of those en-
 " gagements, which youth and inadvertency
 " alone had formed between us, will easily
 " wear off, and as there appeared no probabi-
 " lity of my being happy with *you*, that you
 " have good-nature enough, not to repine at
 " hearing I am so with *another*, nor to hate
 " *Narcissa*, because she is loved by

" PALMEDE.

THIS was the first I opened, and thought
 nothing could have a greater right to astonish
 me, till I found in the billet from *Narcissa* these
 lines.

To AMINTA.

" Dear AMINTA,

" As there was no likelihood of your friends
 " being convinced, as they ought to have been,
 " of the merits of *Palamede*, and you seemed not
 " very inclinable to marry without their con-
 " sent, the correspondence between you served
 " only to keep alive an unavailing passion, which
 " could not but render both of you unhappy;—
 " you cannot, therefore, blame him for trans-
 " ferring his affections, where there were none
 " of these impediments to bar his hopes of suc-
 " cess; much less should you condemn me
 " for being won to approve a person in whose
 " praise your own tongue has been so lavish:
 " —In loving *Palamede*, I but follow the exam-

“ ple of one, whose understanding I acknow-
 “ ledge is superior to my own; and I flatter
 “ myself that when your reason shall get the
 “ better of that resentment, the first shock of
 “ this disappointment may give you, you will
 “ neither accuse him of infidelity, nor me of
 “ breach of friendship, especially when you
 “ shall know the commands of our respective
 “ parents gave a sanction to that mutual incli-
 “ nation which has now united the worthy
 “ *Palamede*, with

“ the happy *NARCISSA*.

I was some time considering whether I should
 make any return to either of these epistles; but
 at last I feared that to be, entirely silent, might
 make them imagine I was speechless through ex-
 cessive grief; and this was a suggestion which I
 confess my vanity could no way brook, so I took
 up my pen, and as I thought neither of them
 deserved a particular answer, wrote the follow-
 ing hasty lines to both, and directed

“ *To the worthy Palamede, and happy Narcissa.*

“ I SHOULD be extremely deficient in that
 “ good sense and understanding you both are
 “ pleased to compliment me with, if I regretted
 “ the union of two persons, who I now perceive
 “ are so very well fitted for each other, that had
 “ heaven disposed you otherwise, two besides
 “ yourselves must have been wretched, and I
 “ hope there are none whose crimes merit so
 “ severe a punishment;—neither shall I give
 “ myself nor you the trouble of entering into
 “ any particulars, concerning the probability or
 “ improbability of fulfilling those engagements,
 “ which

“ which youth and inadvertency indeed alone
 “ could have laid me under ;—it is enough they
 “ are now discharged, and I am released not
 “ only from my vows, but those yet more
 “ binding claims, which a mistaken opinion had
 “ thrown about my heart :—Whatever there-
 “ fore you may be, I am very sensible that
 “ I have the highest reason to subscribe myself,
 “ The fortunate AMINTA.”

How the incomparable *Mira* may approve my conduct in this point, I cannot tell ; but should be glad to know her sentiments in a line, and that I have not acted altogether unworthy the honour I pretend to of being, with the utmost respect, madam,

Your most obedient servant,

AMINTA.



EPISTLE LVII.

[*The Answer.*]

From MIRA to AMINTA, praising her manner of behaviour in so trying an exigence, and setting forth that true greatness of mind consists in commanding our own passions, and being above seeking revenge for any injuries we receive.

My dear AMINTA,


 T is utterly impossible to express how much I am charmed to find yourself the least concerned of any one, at the accident has befallen you : I received an account from *Bellira*, of the whole affair ;

and the ingratitude and treachery of two persons whom you most confided in, gave me an infinite shock. I must confess that I expected to have it repeated by you in a manner widely different from what lies before me:—Till this proof of your moderation, I never knew the value of my friend: Few in so alarming a circumstance, could have acted as you have done: Few but would at least have exclaimed against the perfidiousness of a lover, who, to my knowledge, left no art unpractised to secure you to him by the most solemn obligations; or forbore throwing out some invidious reflections, on the character of a woman, who has supplanted you in the affections of the man for whose sake you have suffered perhaps as much as ever woman did:—This conquest over the most poignant passions that can influence a human heart, is indeed a triumph to which all the worthy part of our sex will readily contribute their acclamations. Accept, my dear *Aminta*, my mite amongst the rest:—I heartily congratulate you that by bearing as you do the loss of one unfaithful lover, you will not only merit, but doubtless receive the unfeigned plaudits of a number of those who know how to distinguish what is truly valuable in our sex:—You will now be restored to the tenderness of your parents, and to that liberty which they but restrained you from, in order to preserve you; and what is yet more than all, you will be restored to that happy tranquility, without which we can neither behave towards heaven as we ought to do, nor be so agreeable as we would wish to our friends on earth.—O! how glorious is this conquest over yourselves;—in my eye it exalts you almost to the angelic nature. I see among my acquaintance, especially those of your age,

age, such a fondness for what they call *petty mischief*, such a delight to teize and fret their companions, in return for any little insult they imagine has been offered them, and such a hatred, such a fixed malice in those of riper years, to whoever has done them the least injury, that I cannot help being warm in extolling a contrary disposition; for after all, as Mr. *Oldham* observes,

*Revenge is but a frailty, incident
To craz'd and sickly minds; the poor content
Of little souls unable to surmount
An injury, too weak to bear affront.*

As to men, indeed, especially those in the military way, a foolish, and, I may say, a wicked custom, has made it honour to resent every little indignity offered to them: But our sex has no such plea; we have no weapons wherewith we can revenge ourselves, except our tongues, and when we make use of them to any such base purpose, we only merit the contempt of all who hear us.—There is, notwithstanding, a certain pride in human nature that renders us prone to repay injuries in kind: But it is the province of reason to curb that emotion, and I know of no occasion in which we have more need of exerting that ray of the Divine Influence within us:—You give a noble proof of the strength of yours, and set an example, which I wish every woman in the like circumstances would endeavour to imitate.—It would save our sex many reflections, which the ill-nature of man, proud of an imagined superiority of understanding, takes every opportunity to load us with.—Had the *Roman* ladies, with their boasted greatness of soul, produced
an

an instance of magnanimity such as yours, *Juvenal*, in treating of *revenge*, would not have recorded it as a *female* vice, in these lines ;

*Ungenerous passion, and for man too base,
It seats its empire in the female race ;
There rages, and to make its blow secure,
Puts flatt'ry on until its aim be sure.*

BUT it must indeed be owned, these *pagan* heroines wanted one help which you are abundantly stored with : The same principles which made the *men* think it more brave to dye, than suffer chains, or banishment, or any other ill accident of life, might also render it more glorious to the *women* to *revenge* than *pardon* injuries.—Our holy religion inspires its votaries with sentiments of a quite contrary nature, and I doubt not but has had a great share in enabling you to sustain, in the manner you have done, so cruel an injustice.—Persevere, my dear *Aminta*, in keeping fast hold of a rock which will never fail to be your support in every exigence that can possibly befall.—True piety is the balm, the *panacea* of the mind ; and whoever has it, is sure to be defended from all those corroding anxieties, those *tourbillions* of thought, which render so many people miserable ; since it is not in effect the thing that happens, but the way in which we judge of it, that makes the unhappiness of mankind.

I EXPECT to be in town in a few days, and shall then hope to see you, and have the opportunity of declaring more at large, how much I am, my dear *Aminta*,

Your affectionate friend and humble servant,
MIRA,



EPISTLE LVIII.

PALMIRA to SOPHRONIA, acquainting her, that by the persuasions of her friends, she had at last consented to be separated from a husband, who had returned the greatest tenderness on her part with an unparallelled brutality and ill-manners.

Madam,

 UITE wearied out with indignities too shocking for repetition, and too cruel for belief, had they not been more public than I wished, I have been drove by the persuasion of my friends into a resolution of quitting a house which almost from my first entrance into it, has been a perpetual scene of misery to me, and am at last separated from *Manilius*;—that *Manilius*, whom I once loved with such excess of fondness,—that *Manilius*, whom to please was all my pride, and whose ill-nature I only combated with tears, and all the soft endearments of a virtuous and sincere affection: Long did I sustain his barbarous treatment with a patience, perhaps, more than was consistent with my character; but when I found he took a pride in affronting me, insulted the calamities he occasioned, and made me the butt of those fiend-like humours, which no other person, not even the meanest servant in his family, would have borne, then indeed I thought it behoved me to summon all my stock of courage, and tear myself at once from a way of living, which instead of amending, grew every day more insupportable.

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THE little regret he testified at parting with me, and the difficulty my friends had of prevailing on him to allow me a maintenance at all answerable to his fortune, would have convinced me, if I had not been too much so before, that his inhuman behaviour towards me proceeded not only from a settled disgust he had conceived for me, but from the badness of his disposition, which might have absolved me from being any way anxious on his account; yet, I know not how it is, but I am restless and uneasy, whenever I reflect on the want he must necessarily have of so faithful, so tender, so careful a friend and companion, as he has lost in me.—I could be glad, methinks, to change my shape, and under some other appearance, render him a thousand kind offices he may stand in need of, and which, were I personally to confer, would lose all their merit in his eyes:—Alas! I cannot forget how dear he has been to me, nor that I am still his wife, though divided from him; the vows I made him at the altar, are for ever in my mind: I am sometimes fearful that no provocations ought to make me dispense with the duties I there bound myself to the performance of, and that no failures on his part can release me from the obligations I am under, of endeavouring to deserve his love, by obeying him in all lawful commands, and doing every thing in my power to contribute to his welfare and happiness; but then again I reflect, that the same ordinance, which made me a *wife*, was never intended to make me the victim of a *husband's* unreasonable passions; that *God*, who gave the sovereignty to *man*, made *woman* a *help-mate*, not a *vassal*; that the sacred institution, which subjected me to *Manilius*, commanded him at the same time

to love and to cherish me; and as he has in every respect so palpably violated the sacred covenant, I have no reason to condemn myself for the part I have acted; since I did in no way violate my duty while I continued with him, and have only flown from him, to shun persecutions too severe to be sustained with life.

THUS, madam, am I divided within myself: How hard is my fate, that which way soever I behave, I can neither satisfy the world, nor myself:—Many have thought me too passive, and condemned my want of that proper resentment, becoming a woman, who knew her conduct to be unblameable; others may, and doubtless do, think I have carried things to too high a pitch.—My own reason tells me, that in justice to myself, I ought to throw off all tenderness for a man who has so much abused it; but the precepts of religion raise scruples in me, which make me tremble:—O did every wise consider the duties of her place as I have done, how few would venture to endure the struggles which a separation must necessarily inflict!—Can *Manilius* be easy? Morose, hard-hearted, and unloving as he is, sure he must have some moments of remorse, though his pride will not permit him to confess it? On whom, like *Palmira*, can he now depend for the œconomy of his family? Who with officious love will now attend him in every ailment? Where will he now find a friend, within whose faithful bosom he might lock up the dearest secrets of his life, secure as in his own? Unhappy man!—But wherefore should I pity him?—He sought the misfortunes he sustains, mine are forced upon me.

I TAKE

I TAKE the privilege of friendship, madam, to trouble you with all the little reasonings I have within myself upon this melancholly subject, and should be extremely obliged to have your opinion, which side of the question it will best become me to adhere to:—Loath am I to render myself contemptible to my sex by a mean submission, and more loath yet to act in a manner which might seem inconsistent, either with my moral or religious character;—your advice therefore will be the highest act of kindness to,

Madam, your most perplexed,
But, most humble servant,

PALMIRA.



EPISTLE LIX.

From SOPHRONIA to PALMIRA, encouraging her by all means to persist in her resolution of living apart from her husband, till she should be thoroughly convinced there was an entire reformation in his manners; and proving, that for two people to live together in a perpetual discord, is only aggravating the sin of which ever of them is the occasion. In answer to the foregoing.

Madam,

I T is so impossible for two persons of unequal understanding, and different dispositions, to enjoy a perfect happiness together, that I feared the short date of yours from the moment of your marriage: I foresaw that all your natural complaisance, though heightened by the extremest tenderness for the person of *Manilius*, would not always be sufficient to make you give up your reason to his every wild caprice, and that he had too great a share

share of pride, ever to own he had been in the wrong, tho' convinced he was so.

YOUR conduct, indeed, exceeded my expectations. I have often been amazed, that a woman, who knows so well what politeness and good-manners require between persons united as you are, could support, with any degree of patience, so gross, so churlish a behaviour: Never was the power of love more manifest than in compelling you, in contradiction to the justice due to yourself, and the privileges of your sex, to submit to such a series of repeated insults as have been offered you by that injurious man:—But you have at length regained your liberty, and sure it is impossible you can entertain the least thought of returning into fetters which the cruelty of your tyrant rendered so galling to you! I hope not; yet if not so, wherefore these unnecessary scruples?—You have already acquitted yourself of all, and much more than the duty of a wife exacted:—You can but act the same part over again, and you have sadly experienced how little effect your tenderness has had on his obdurate nature:—That amiable softness, which would have charmed any other man, served only to make him peevish, and that agreeable manner of conversation, so enlivening to all who partook of it, only to give him an opportunity of shewing his power over you, by contradicting all you said, tho' never so just.—In fine, the more graces you discovered, the more he was displeased; and the more tokens you gave him of your affection, the less he affected to be obliged by them, lest you should imagine yourself entitled to an adequate return. The truth is, *Manilius*, though not delicate in his ideas,
has

has some little share of understanding, and that making him conscious of the superiority of yours, his ill-nature views your perfections with an eye of envy, not admiration, and as it is somewhere said of an ill husband, *uses you worse than he would any body else, because he is sensible he cannot use you so well as you deserve.*

THIS being the case between you, what consequences would your return produce, but such as could be of as little advantage to your moral or religious character, as to your peace of mind; it would only afford *Manilius* fresh opportunities of violating both divine and human laws, and of unnaturally perverting the design of the institution, by turning into perpetual discord what was meant for the most perfect and lasting harmony.—You were pleased to desire my opinion, and I give it you with the freedom of a friend, and as it is dictated by my heart, and approved by the best reason I am mistress of.—Conquer but your own tenderness, and I dare venture to assure you, that you need be under no apprehensions either of offending heaven, or incurring the censure of your acquaintance; by the one you will certainly be absolved, according to the purity of your intentions; and by the other, on account of the public provocations they have been witness of your receiving.

BANISH, therefore, as much as possible, I entreat you, these too great niceties which give you such inquietude:—Content yourself with being willing to do any good offices in your power, for this ungenerous husband, at a distance, if necessity required it, and offering up your prayers to Heaven for his conversion. This

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in your present situation is all that can be required of you, either by the world or your own conscience; and should you behave in a different manner, and again expose yourself to that ill treatment you are so happily delivered from, it may be imputed to weakness: and how must it mortify a woman of superior sense, if the world should ascribe to a defect of understanding what she meant as the strongest testimony of conjugal affection.

BUT I hope these remonstrances are needless, and that your good sense will by degrees get the better of an affection so ill placed, and so ungratefully requited.—It is time enough for you to forget the injuries you have sustained, when thoroughly convinced the person who offered them is so truly ashamed of his errors as to be rendered incapable of repeating them: But when one considers the natural bent of his disposition, and how it has been strengthened and confirmed in him by a long habitude, such a change would be a miracle, which I dare not flatter you with the most distant view of, and would therefore warn you to be upon your guard against any deception of that kind:—It behoves you now to be cautious how you give credit to pretences which you have more than once found to be fallacious, and calculated only with the base design of getting you into his power, in order to exercise that power with an almost unexampled barbarity.—Be as wise, at least, as the dove,

—*Who, from birds of prey escap'd,
Enjoys the refuge bounteous fate bestow'd;
Nor ventures forth to tempt a second danger.*

I PROPOSE myself the pleasure of waiting on you in a few days, and shall rejoice to find you in a situation of mind, which will afford more matter for congratulation than advice; being with all sincerity, madam,

Your most affectionate friend,

SOPHRONIA.



EPISTLE LX.

From PANTHEA at Paris, to MIRANDA in London; giving her an account of the arrival of an English lady, and the motive which had brought her thither.

My dear MIRANDA,

M ADAM the countess de M***, who is certainly one of the best-natured, as well as best-bred women upon earth, would needs oblige me to pass a few weeks with her, at a fine country seat she has about 20 miles distant from *Paris*.—I could give you such a description of the place, and the company we found there, as in spite of your attachment to *Windsor*, would make you wish to have been with us:—But the pleasures I partook of there, deprived me for a time of another, which I assure you, without compliment, will always be the most valuable to me, I mean that of your obliging letter, which came not to my hands till yesterday, when I returned; the people of my *hotel* neglecting to forward it to me, though I had given strict orders that any packet directed for me, should be sent,

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THE fresh proofs you give me of your friendship, demand all the grateful acknowledgments in my power to make; but I am a little surprized, that among all the news you tell me, you make no mention of lady ****'s having a fifth time broke through the conjugal hoop, and left her lord to console himself, for her elopement, in small beer and *Seville* oranges. Some days before I made this little excursion with madame de M***, I heard she was arrived, having come by the way of *Holland*, and as she was my country woman, and a woman of quality, intended to pay her the civility of a visit, especially as I was informed she was come without any other company than her servants, so that my character could no way suffer by being known to be of the number of her acquaintance; but one accident or other preventing my going immediately, I declined going at all, by being told, she came hither on the invitation of a certain great warrior, who keeps a little seraglio in his camp, and changes the one as often as the duties of his post oblige him to do the situation of the other:—A perfect knowledge of her disposition rendering this account but too probable, I suspended my visit, and soon after heard she was actually in his house, did the honours of his table, and received the homage of all his dependants, as the person through whose influence alone, any favour is to be obtained from him.

IN this situation I left her when I went into the country, and at my return found she had quitted *Paris*, to accompany her illustrious lover to the *Low Countries*, where, no doubt, she will continue, till obliged to give way to some new object; the M*** it seems being no less inconstant,

stant, than violent in his amours; but as this is an event she has too often experienced to be much mortified at, I fancy you will see her come back to her lord, with the same charms she ever had in his eyes, and he will say with the poet,

*If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forget them all.*

INDEED, my dear *Miranda*, I heartily wish my country-women would content themselves with playing the fool only at home, and not give the *French* the same reason to call in question the chastity of our women, as they pretend they have for sneering at the understanding of our men:—The conduct of some other ladies, who, as well as she I have been speaking of, have taken it in their heads to bring their frolics here, and the fat ambassador in a twing, will always afford matter of ridicule among the *petit maitres*, upon *English* virtue and politeness.

Do not laugh at me for valuing so exploded and old-fashioned a thing as public spirit:—You cannot deny but that the garb of patriotism is still worn by those who find it their interest to do so, and I shall always have the honour of my own sex so much at heart, as to look with an extreme regret on every thing that lessens it.

I AM not at all surprized at the account you give me of colonel G****'s being turned *methodist*: Human nature, among people of all nations, is very apt to run into extreams; when *libertinism* ceases, *enthusiasm* frequently succeeds. Those here, who have spent three parts of their lives in debauchery, imagine that in devoting the

fourth

fourth to acts of penance and humiliation, they shall atone for all the midemeanors of the past; so in *England*, a contempt of all has been laid by the *old* apostles, is only to be compensated for by a bigotted zeal for the doctrines of those who pretend to be *new* ones: *Whitfield* and the *Westleys*, I hear, have made many proselites; but their success is not to be repined at, if under the form of novelty, they only aim to bring their followers into the paths trodden by their forefathers.

BUT these are points, my dear, which neither you nor I have any business to discuss:—The impressions long since made on our hearts by religion are too excellent to be defaced by the bad examples of a depraved world, or to stand in need of novel-forms to recommend them. I hope we are both sincere, and endeavour to be more perfect: This is our duty, and let us leave the rest to heaven.

FAREWELL, my dear *Miranda*, be assured you cannot be more desirous of my return to *London*, than I now am myself; but at present you know it is impossible; no passports are granted, and you would not wish me to take the same rout her ladyship did, especially as I have no such protector: They talk of a peace being on the anvil, I wish it were concluded, for till then I must rest satisfied with telling you at this distance, that I am,

With the profoundest sincerity, yours &c.

PANTHEA.



EPISTLE LXI.

From a gentleman to MELISSA, on the present reigning distemper, called a dejection of spirits, a fever on the spirits, vapours, &c. cum multis aliis.

Madam,

HIS age is so extravagantly fond of novelty, that we cannot content ourselves with a perpetual revolution in our habits, our furniture, our equipages, but we must also have new modes of diseases; as if the ministers of wrath commissioned for the chastisement of a sinful world were as fickle as ourselves:—There is a certain disorder pretty epidemic among the human species, by whom alone it is felt, which has more names than ever *Proteus* is said to have shapes; every empyrick that sets up for the cure of it, pretends to have made some new discovery into the cause, and from that cause forms a new appellation: Poor *Clarissa* has been in a languishing condition for some time; as she is my wife's sister, friendship and good-manners oblige me to visit her frequently, and I never go without finding some new physician with her, whose opinion of her disorder is quite different from all those who were consulted before him:—One told me it proceeded from an irruption of the spleen;—A second from thickness of blood;—A third from an indigestion;—A fourth said it was a fever on the *spirits*, occasioned by a too great velocity of the animal

animal faculties;—A fifth would have it a fever on the *nerves*, brought upon her by an ill state of the fluids;—And the last I saw there, assured me, with an affected air of solemnity, that his fair patient's distemper was a *febricula* or little fever, a wandering fire which confined itself to no one part, but visited each by turns.—This variety of opinions occasioning a variety of prescriptions, it is not to be doubted but that she will at last be reduced to a condition out of which it may not be easy to recover her.

It very much surprises me, that learned men suffer themselves to be so much imposed on, or impose upon others, in relation to this disorder:—Not any one of them, at least that I have heard of, ever searched for the cause of it, any farther than the *body*, when methinks it is evident, by all the circumstances, that its true original is in the *mind*: To me it seems demonstrable, that it is *there* bred, *there* fixes its seat, and not till it has gathered great strength has any influence over the outward frame. We often see persons in a strange dejection without the least symptoms of ill health otherwise:—They eat, they drink, with as good an appetite as ever, they sleep as well, and if you ask them why they are such ill company, they will only tell you, that they have a heaviness hangs upon them which they are not able to shake off, nor give any reason for.—Well indeed may they be ignorant, when the physicians they apply to for relief, are so themselves, and mistaking the cause, prescribe physic, which instead of working any cure, only serves to weaken the vitals, and give the distemper room to prey upon them much sooner than else it could have done.—It must be owned this is making

work for themselves, and if not owing to ignorance, is a cruel policy ; and the poor patient becomes at last a martyr to their gain : It is not then in their power to relieve him, for when once the *native* vigour of the *constitution* is destroyed, art cannot restore what it has lost ; medicine may afford some help to nature in the beginning of a decay, but never can bring it back to what it was before ; I mean that the breath, when seeming to be just upon the wing, may possibly be detained, and for a time prolonged, but then that very prolongation is but what we may call a kind of middle state between life and death ; the patient is incapable of enjoying any of the pleasures of the one, and feels all the horrors of the other : — A reprieve scarce to be wished ! yet this is all the effect of physic even at the best, and when most judiciously prescribed : — A few lines of Mr. *Dryden* comes into my mind as often as any occasion of this nature presents itself ;

*Physicians can only mend a crazy state,
Help it a little, but not renovate.
The first physicians by debauch were made ;
Excess began, and sloth sustains the trade ;
The wise for cure on exercise depend,
God never made his work for man to mend,*

BUT I think it may be plainly proved, that this disorder, though no doubt a very odd one, and in spite of the sad effect it brings by degrees upon the body, at the beginning, is nothing but a meer inactivity of the *mind* : — Those chiefly affected by it, are such as have the least visible cause for being so ; Rarely do we find a person labouring under the difficulties of fortune, and struggling through a cruel and ungenerous world for a pre-
carious

carious substance, discover any symptoms of it: No, it is certainly the child of ease and indolence; the *mind* stands in need of exercise as much as the *body*, and where it has not something wherewith to busy itself, will naturally fall into an inactive state, or *lethargy*, which seems to me a more proper term, than any ascribed to it by the physicians. Do we not see that persons in this unhappy ailment, will sit for two hours together with their eyes fixed on whatever happens to be situated before them, yet know not that they see it: Tell them the most interesting story, they will know nothing of what you have been saying, though in all appearance they have listened to it the whole time:—Yet neither the *eyes* nor the *ears* are in fault, but that intelligent faculty by which alone all ideas are conveyed: What then can such a state be called but an *absence*, or, as I said before, a *lethargy of mind*, which renders the organs of the senses of no use.

THE affinity, indeed, between the two parts which together constitute the human system, is so great, that it is scarce possible for either of them to be much affected, without the other bearing some share; so that when the *mind* is debilitated by a stagnation of *thought*, it is no wonder that the *body* should be brought by it into all those disorders which arise from the want of a proper circulation of the blood, and from an imbecility of the nerves.

How necessary it is therefore for persons who on account of their sex, infirmities, want of inclination in themselves, or any other circumstance, are secluded from the cares of any public business, and by the affluence of fortune from

those of private life, to find out something whereby the attention of the soul may be kept awake; and I know not whether it is not better, at least for themselves, to be amused with things which are not altogether praise-worthy, than to be wholly idle. — I speak as a philosopher in this point, for according to the system of *christianity*, and the belief of a future existence, we are to bestow no part of the time allotted us in this world on trifles. But for heaven's sake, why need we have recourse to trifles? — Is there not enough in the wide creation to employ our minds? — We have the wonders of the heavens and earth before us, we are above, below, on every side surrounded with an infinity of matter for speculation. — Wherever we turn our eyes, nature pours forth a profusion of entertainments, which in a particular succession of variety, still excite the most pleasurable surprize in a thinking mind. — Could not the great *Dioclesian*, and the yet greater *Scipio*, when retired from the tumults of war, and the anxieties of state, find sufficient to employ themselves in the narrow compass of their own gardens? — And yet how many are there, who even amidst the hurry of the great world are noteless beholders of every thing that passes! *They have eyes, as the scripture phrases it, and will not see, have ears and will not hear!* The soul is dead, and yet the body lives! Lives, but how? Why in a condition more to be commiserated than death, a burden to itself, and a disturbance to every one about it.

You see, madam, I have troubled you with an essay instead of a letter, yet am under a necessity of lengthening it still farther by acquainting you with the motives I had for addressing you

on

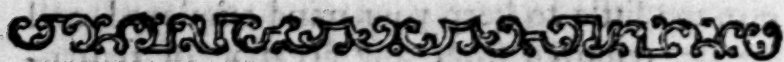
on this score:—You who have rather too much than too little to keep your mind employed, and are far removed from any occasion of remonstrances of this nature:—Permit me then to tell you, that it is not for your sake, but that of one very near you in blood, and yet much nearer in the mutual affection between you; after this I need not say I mean the beautiful *Semanthe*: It is with an extreme concern I have of late observed some symptoms of this disorder appear in her behaviour:—She seems to me to be growing tasteless in those things which she once took the greatest pleasure in; a cold indifference for all the joys of life is creeping on her; her air, her dress, are on a sudden neglected, and though in spite of herself she charms as many as approach her, yet she discovers rather a discontent than satisfaction at the proofs given her of it: In fine, there is a kind of lassitude in all she does, that if not shook off, in time, may be attended with all the pernicious consequences both of mind and person I have been describing.

THE least attention on your part, I am confident, will convince you I am not deceived in my conjectures, and am equally certain, that when you are so, you will employ some part of your cares in inventing some pretty stratagem that may serve to give an exhilarating turn to the faculties of her mind.

THIS, madam, was the sole intention of this letter, and is the best apology I can make for taking up so much of that time which I know is very precious to you. I am, madam,

Your most devoted humble servant,

A. Z.



EPISTLE LXII.

From MIRA to her neice, to whom, being lately married, she gave some instructions how to behave, so as to gain the lasting affection of her husband.

My dear neice,



It is not to congratulate you on your nuptials that I now write:—You know, without my telling you so, that I wish you all the felicity which the best of states, when most happily circumstanced, can bestow; but it is to remind you in what manner you are to behave, in order to render it such as you hope, and I sincerely pray it may be.

YOUR education, and the disposition I have always observed in you, prevent me from any apprehensions of our deviating from the strictest rules of virtue; your tenderness of heart, and the exalted degrees of love with which his merits have inspired your reason, assure me that you will not omit any of those established duties of a *wife*, which you think may oblige him to be a good *husband*: But, my dear, there are a thousand other delicacies, of which you may not be aware, yet are so highly necessary to preserve that harmony between you, that without them, even love itself, though never so ardent, will be found too weak to make marriage completely happy.

Ir

IT is an error fatal to our sex, to depend too much on the force of our personal accomplishments:—That woman who imagines those charms which *gained* the heart, will be sufficient to keep it, is in great danger of being deceived and undone by her own vanity:—The most dazzling beauty, when familiar, loses its attractive power, and all the admiration it at first inspired, grows faint and languid by degrees, as the humorous poet says,

*For after matrimony's over,
He that holds out but half a lover,
Deserves for every minute more
Than for an age of love before.*

TAKE, then, a few maxims which a twelve years happy experience has convinced me afford the most sure means, not only of preserving, but of encreasing the affection of a husband.

1st. ALWAYS preserve a medium between an *over-fondness*, and a cold *insensibility*:—The *one* will cloy, and the *other* make him *indifferent*.

2d. LET the tenderness you have for him discover itself more by *actions* than *words*:—When you say any thing very endearing, let it appear as if it escaped you without design.

3d. NEVER discover any uneasiness if he should happen to be absent oftner than you should wish:—Enquire not into the cause, nor what place he frequents; but when he returns, receive him with so much chearfulness and good humour, as shall make him reflect he can no where find a more agreeable companion.

4th. If at any time he should chance to be a little sullen or peevish, be careful not to let him see you take notice he is so, for that would only serve to heighten his ill humour, but rather surprize him out of it by the relation of some whimsical incident, either of your own inventing, or that your memory supplies you with.

5th. WHEN reasoning together on any subject, in which you happen to differ in opinion, seem at first to agree with his, till you have heard all he has to urge in its defence, then modestly offer your own, but do it rather by way of *query* than *argument*, and never appear too positive; if what you maintain be right, he will the easier be convinced it is so, by your affecting to be dubious, than if you are tenacious; and if *wrong*, you forfeit not your understanding to him, when convinced of your mistake.

6th, If (which heaven forbid) any emotions of jealousy should come into your head, use your utmost endeavours to prevent so pernicious a passion from taking the least root:—Contrive no methods to find out whether he gives you any just room for suspicion or not; but, on the contrary, if any accident should betray his having really wronged you in this point, be careful to conceal the discovery from his knowledge:—Whatever you suffer in so cruel a circumstance, disguise it under a shew of the most perfect confidence, and treat even your injurious rival, if she happen to be of your acquaintance, with the greatest civilities you can assume: Such a behaviour will make a man, not abandoned to all the principles of honour and gratitude, ashamed of what he has been guilty of, and contribute
more

more effectually to the reclaiming him, than either reproaches or complaints; the one would *barden* him in his crime, the other by *wearying* him, afford some pretence for returning where he can be more at rest, and in some measure destroy the effect of that regret, which I believe all men of sense must feel, sooner or later, for having been guilty of an injustice of this nature, and which of itself, if left to operate, would bring them back to virtue, and make them say with *Milton*, in his admirable description of marriage,

*Hail, wedded love! mysterious law!
True source of human blessings,
Founded in reason, loyal, just and pure;
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets!
Here love his golden shafts employs, here lights
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings;
Here reigns, and revels, not in the bought smiles
Of harlots, loveless, joyless, unendear'd,
Casual fruition, nor in court amours,
Mix'd dance, or wanton mask, or midnight ball.*

THESE, my dear neice, are laudable arts in a wife, and the only ones I should wish you to put in practice; for the least deception in any other case, tho' it may seem in a meer trifle, may prove of the utmost importance, and, if detected, lays a foundation for distrust in things of the greatest consequence, and is the source of eternal jars.

I AM well aware that it will be more difficult for you to comply with the first and second rule, than with any of the others; and I grant it is denying ones self a great pleasure to restrain the

dictates of a soul overflowing with love and tenderness; and you will think it an ill-natured prudence which forbids to express, in the softest and most passionate terms, how high a sense you have of the happiness of your condition.—Indeed, my dear, I would have him be ignorant of nothing that passes in your heart, with regard to the affection you have for him; but there are other ways than words to convey the knowledge of it to him, which will be yet more convincing and obliging.—Love may be so well counterfeited as to pass for real, but it never can be concealed:—Many a wife has deceived her husband by a shew of fondness, but none, how little reason soever she might have for letting him see the power he had over her, could ever disguise her tenderness under the mask of indifference. Mr. Cowley, who, if we may judge by his writings, was no less a master in the art of love, than Ovid himself, and seems to know all the turns and windings of that passion, lays it down as an apparent truth, that,

*Love's fair resemblance may with ease be shewn,
But those who have it, ne'er can seem to have none.*

THERE are a thousand little incidents in life, which afford a woman proper opportunities of convincing her husband how very dear he is to her; without offending delicacy: I can give you an instance of one which happened to a lady of my acquaintance, which I never think of without pleasure; it was this.

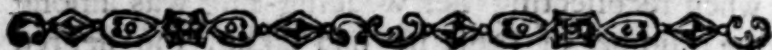
EGILDA, for so I shall call her, happening to be abroad somewhat later than was her custom, was attacked in coming home by three high-

highwaymen, one of whom stopped the coachman, another secured her footman behind, and the third presented a pistol to her breast, bidding her deliver her money, and what else she had of value about her, on which she immediately gave him her purse, watch, and the rings upon her fingers; he was just going off with his booty, when recollecting her wedding-ring was among the number of those he had taken, she desired him to stop; *Hold, Sir*, said she, *I have another jewel which I will gladly exchange with you, for one of little value to any but myself*; she then plucked a rich bracelet from her arm, and on delivering it, conjured him to return her wedding-ring, telling him at the same time, that on condition he complied with her desire in this point, he might depend on all the interest in her power to save his life, in case the unfortunate methods he at present pursued, should bring him under the sentence of the law.—She told me that the earnestness with which she made this request, had such an effect upon this wretch, that, though inur'd to acts of violence and rapine, he could not forbear returning the ring, bursting into a kind of rapturous acclamation on her conjugal virtue, and took his leave, wishing she might long enjoy the happy man from whom she had received that precious pledge.

How evident a proof was here, that she is charmed with the state to which this ring had introduced her; and how much must it endear her to her worthy husband!—But though, my dear, an incident of this kind may never happen to you, you cannot fail of meeting with others which will give you an equal opportunity of improving them to the advantage of your character,
and

and the increase of his affection, the two essential supports of conjugal happiness. — Adieu, my dear niece; by entertaining you on the theory, I have, perhaps, too long detained you from the practice. — I am

Your most affectionate aunt,
MIRA.



EPISTLE LXIII.

From ARISTANDER to MELISSA, being an attempt to prove, from the principles of reason and philosophy, the certainty of a future existence, and the absurdity and meanness of those people's notions, who degrade the dignity of their species, and put human nature on a level with that of the brute creation.

Madam,

THE conversation last night turned on a subject in which I did not chuse to interfere, because I should have had but few hearers, most of those who would have opposed the arguments I must necessarily have urged, being such as are better pleased with what they say themselves, than any thing can be offered by another, and too much biggotted to the mode, to be able to endure the least word in contradiction to it: But to my inexpressible satisfaction, I found the amiable *Melissa* seemed not altogether pleased with the pains a pert *would-be-wit* took to prove the *brute creation* equal, and in many respects even superior to the *reasonable* one: — I perceive you were more than once opening your lovely mouth in vindication of the human species,

species, but were obliged to suppress those admirable things might have been expected from you, by interruptions no less ridiculous than ill-mannered:—However, as the enemies of truth are industrious in propagating the notions they are resolved to maintain, and a perpetual repetition of the same arguments (fallacious as they are) from persons whose society, in the station you are, you cannot well avoid, may in time corrupt your religious principles, and make you doubtful concerning a future existence, I take the liberty to present you with a few occasional thoughts as they occurred to me after leaving the company.

NOTHING is more astonishing to me than to hear any man, of even common sense, make the least doubt of the immortality of the soul, since even that very power of doubting confutes his own argument, and gives the strongest proof against him.—Can the brute creation, with which these scepticks are so desirous of putting themselves on a level, *consider* whether they are to live hereafter or not?—Does the ox or the sheep reflect to what purpose they are hurried through the streets?—Or have they any previous idea of the slaughter-house, to which they are drove?—The most sagacious animal has no thought beyond what the senses convey. A horse on full gallop will start and stop short at the brink of a precipice, because he sees it; but did not the optic nerve befriend him, he would not step cautiously from an apprehension there might be some such danger in his way. The dog pursues the hare by the scent; the ear of the hare gives warning of her enemy's approach:—Instinct directs all animals of two things to chuse the best, but it is through
the

the senses alone that instinct operates:—Some are guided chiefly by the sight, some by the smell, others by the ear; but none, unless the object strikes one or other of the senses, have a desire of pursuing or avoiding.—It is *man* alone who has the power of forethought, of anticipating in idea the good he wishes, or the ill he fears, of judging, of comparing, and anticipating events not yet arrived;—of forming schemes for happiness, and contriving means to avert the frowns of adverse fortune:—Fancy and imagination, the attributes of an intelligent soul, are no where to be found, but in man, and furnish matter of speculation to the mind, when the organs of sense, through age or accident, are impaired or destroyed.—*Homer* and *Milton* were blind, yet we have glorious proofs of the discerning mind in both those admirable authors:—The mind through all her powers shining irradiate, enabled them, as the latter truly says,

———*To see and tell*
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

I BELIEVE common experience is an evidence with every one, that in darkness, which shuts out all exterior objects, we are so far from wanting ideas to entertain us, that for the most part our conceptions are stronger, more distinct and clear, than in the brightest day; the reason of which is, the senses, being employed with that variety which light presents, are apt to occasion a remissness of thought:—Even in sleep, when the *body* is the same as dead, the *mind* still lives and wakes:—We build, we take journies, make friendships, revenge injuries, do various offices of love or hatred, according to the passion
with

with which the soul is at that time agitated.—
But this is so admirably expressed in the poem
entituled, *Night Thoughts, of life, death, and
immortality*, that not to borrow a short quotation
from it, would be doing an injury to the subject
I have taken in hand. Speaking of the immor-
tality of the soul, he says,

*'Tis past conjecture! all things rise in proof,
While o'er my limbs sleep's soft dominion's spread:
What tho' my soul fantastic measures trod
O'er fairy fields, or mourn'd along the gloom
Of pathless woods, or down the craggy steep
Hurl'd headlong, swam with pain the mantled pool;
Or scal'd the cliff, or danc'd on hollow winds
With antic shapes, wild natives of the brain?
Her ceaseless flight, tho' devious, speaks her nature
Of subtler essence than the trodden clod,
Active, aerial, tow'ring, unconfin'd,
Unfetter'd with her gross companion's fall.
Even silent night proclaims my soul immortal!
Even silent night proclaims eternal day!
For human good heaven husbands all events;
Dull sleep instructs, nor sport vain dreams in vain.*

It ought to be no objection to the doctrine
of what he advances here, that he is a clergy-
man, and it is his profession to preach in this
manner. He is indeed a divine, but he is also
a man of understanding and a philosopher, and
whatever his function may lead him to say in the
pulpit, he is under no necessity of preaching in
poetry, if he were not in reality convinced of
this great truth, and thought himself bound, by
all the arguments in his power, to inculcate into
others the heavenly doctrine of the immortality
of the soul.

You

—You see, madam, I have mentioned not one word of religion, have borrowed no proofs from sacred writ, nor represented how far we are bound, by the precepts of *christianity*, to believe in and depend upon a future state: I have only endeavoured to expose the folly and absurdity of a contrary opinion, and how far setting aside the laws and ordinances of all churches in the world, we sin against ourselves in being of a contrary opinion.—The *deist*, the *pagan*, he that scarce allows of one God, or he that worships ten thousand, are equally with the *christian* concerned in this dispute:—It is the right of reason, the right of the powers within ourselves, which oblige us to acknowledge the half divinity of our nature, and consequently that the part which is so must be immortal and unperishable.

I HAVE formerly very much wondered, what should give rise to such mean notions in mankind, who, in other things, have but too much pride, till a little consideration discovered to me that it was to this very pride it was owing:—Strange paradox! you will say, yet I think this seeming opposition may be easily reconciled:—All ages have produced men, who, not content with displaying their talents in a road, through which many had passed before them, have set up for broaching new doctrines, and inventing new systems, in contradiction to the former; so that the pride of being thought the first who was able to arrive at *truth*, has laid the foundation of all the *falsehoods* that gradually have crept into the world. This resolving all things into *matter*, and turning immortality out of doors, is doubtless derived from the same source:—The most sure, as well as most easy method any one can take

take to acquire the reputation of a *wit*, is first to affect a particularity of opinion, and then to be noisy and obstinate in maintaining it: — I cannot believe that *Lucretius* himself had really those unworthy ideas of human nature which some part of his writings maintain: but I have long since been ashamed of the countenance they have given to his disciples, who, wanting capacity to imitate his nobler works, are vain and proud of doing it in this.

BUT after all, these people are greatly to be pitied: What can be more melancholly than a life of continual doubt! for I am pretty positive no man can assure himself of annihilation; to doubt, therefore, and doubt not, till at last they drop into a dreadful certainty, when conviction will come too late, and a sense of past infidelity can only terminate in despair; is a condition, which as the truly wise will never fall into, it is their duty to afford all the warnings they are capable of, against the infatuation to which weaker minds may be subjected.

THUS, madam, I flatter myself you are convinced that pride is the original of those notions which in the eye of reason appear so mean and absurd; for my part, I never hear a person, who I know has more understanding than to believe what he says, make use of the powers of human nature, to depreciate human nature, without remembering a song, which in my younger days was much in vogue, and by my changing one word, is the exact description of what a modern *free-thinker* must feel within himself,

'Twas pride hot as hell,
That first made me rebel,

From

*From truth's lawful throne a curst victim I fell,
Fool, fool, that consider'd not when I was well.*

I AM ready however to confess, and am sorry to find it so, that there are many, who mean well, unhappily drawn into this way of thinking; they are deceived by the specious pretence of *morality*, and taught to believe that, to do good actions, exclusive of the hopes of future happiness, is sublime perfection, but to act from a principle of reward, is mean, selfish, and mercenary.—This sounds well indeed; could it be reduced to practice. Nobody will deny but that a strict *morality* comprehends every virtue, every beneficent quality; it teaches us not to infringe on any account the laws of society; to do hurt to no man, and all the good in our power to every one; whoever keeps up entirely to this, deserves the utmost applause:—But, alas! who is the man? The *pernicious* passions, in spite of precept, in spite of our own wish, will often get the better of the more noble. *To do to others as we would they should do unto us*, is a rule of uncontested authority: it speaks to the understanding; but will it govern the heart? will it prevent self-gratifications and guilty indulgencies, when the flames of appetite rage? let experience answer these questions. No, it is the steadfast belief of immortality alone can enable us to resist that torrent of temptations, the world and its allurements are continually pouring upon us; the *moral sense*, is of itself too weak to stem the tide.

BUT I forget I am writing to a lady, who though surrounded with all that renders this world so charming, as to make many of her age forgetful of a better, has in her whole behaviour testified

testified she regards it no other than as it really is, a state of probation, has views far beyond the tinsel splendor of a court, and is ambitious of shining an angel in a superior orb.

MAY you ever remain firm and unshaken in these principles, which will gain you a settled empire over the hearts of all the wise and good on earth, and alone entitle you to a glorious hereafter. I am, madam,

Your faithfully devoted servant,

ARISTANDER.

P. S. THE excellent *Sophronia* came in as I was going to seal this, and finding it directed to you, would needs see the contents:—After perusing what I had wrote, she obliged me to add a quotation, which nothing but her commands could have made me insert to you, from an old poet, whose works she says you are well acquainted with:—The lines are these;

—Fair modesty's a charm
So stamp'd and blended in the female race,
That nothing but a court can quite erase.

Once more I am, the charming *Melissa's*, &c.



EPISTLE



EPISTLE LXIV.

From CIAMARA to SOPHRONIA, giving her an account of the finishing a fine building she had been at vast expence in erecting, and the many inconveniences which deprived her of all the satisfaction she hoped to have found in it; with some moral reflections on the vanity and disappointment of all sublunary expectations.

Dear madam,



THE labour of five years is at last completed; — nothing for pleasure or convenience is wanting in my house; I might also add grandeur, for there is a certain air of stateliness in the whole, which has acquired it the name of a palace in epitome: — As I was the architect myself, and all is executed exactly according to the plan I drew up, you may perhaps be curious to know what sort of fancy, for I pretend not to any skill in rules, is shewn in this particular: — The building is square, very lofty, and having the advantage of standing on an eminence, may be seen at a considerable distance: — My court-yard is encompassed with an iron palisadoe pretty high, will contain upwards of twenty coaches without crowding, and leads you by a flight of steps into a hall, spacious enough for a house of six times the bigness of mine: It is supported by two rows of pillars, five on a side, between which you walk to the great stair-case; on the right-hand of this hall, or *salle*, a folding-door opens
into



S. Wale delin.

J. Mynde sc.



into a parlour of the same length, within which is a small drawing-room; on the left are three other parlours, of about fourteen foot square, and these take up all the ground below stairs. — My middle floor consists of a gallery the whole length of the house, with arched windows on the one side, and chambers on the other: — A little avenue between leads to a large dining-room and drawing-room; — the third is lodging-rooms, with an iron balcony over the gallery, and above all a turret, or lanthorn, to which you ascend by winding stairs, is large enough for a dozen people to be seated in commodiously, and has a view of the whole country, for many miles round; as to the kitchen, confectionary, and other offices, they are at a distance from the house, but have a communication with it, by a passage under ground, so as every thing comes hot to table.

As to my gardens, I have contrived them in a manner no less out of the common road; all the grounds belonging to the house, of which there is a vast extent, except one small plat for flowers, are laid out in green walks, close arbours in the midst of thickets, grotts, by the side of a little canal, which, with a good deal of expence, I have had cut out, and supplies some cascades I have made; and falling from a kind of rock, which is also artificial, on some shells and pebbles I have filled the valley beneath it with, makes a most agreeable murmur, and might lull the mind of a person who delights in solitude, into a reverie far beyond all the pleasure which a mixed society of eternal talkers can bestow. — In fine, madam, I suited this recess to my own way of thinking, and flattered myself with

with enjoying many delightful hours of contemplation, in a place which so much indulged it: —I took so much pleasure in the idea, that the whole time the work was finishing, I scarce thought of any thing else: —I rose before the sun, encouraging the artificers to be diligent by all the means in my power, and laboured as much as any of them in such things as my strength and capacity would permit, and when at last it was completed, beheld the product of my brain with a satisfaction not to be described: I ranged through the winding paths of the wilderness. —I viewed the close alcoves, the bowers of jessamin, the grotts, and said to myself, *here will I sit defended from the noon-tide heat; —here, with some chosen friend, will I run over the vanities of the gay noisy world, and laugh at the follies of the giady great; —here enjoy the sweet delights of innocence and peace; —here, when alone, give a loose to the most rapturous meditations on the great author of nature, —examine my past life, and study to regulate the future: —In fine, I expected to reap the joys of paradise on this silvan scene, and to enjoy what is not to be found on earth, a perfect repose, an undisturbed content: —I thought myself now in possession of what I so long and ardently have wished for, a calm retreat from business, from cares, from more vexatious ceremony, and all those fantastic follies, which are miscalled pleasures: —No longer now envyed the fields of *Tempe* and *Arcadia*, nor wishing my lot had been cast beyond the *Alps*, cryed out, with *Addison*,*

*Bear me some God to Baia's gentle seats,
Or cover me in Umbria's green retreats,
Where e'en rough rocks with tender myrtle bloom,
And trodden weeds send out a rich perfume;*

*Where western gales eternally reside,
And all the seasons lavish all their pride ;
Blossoms, and fruits, and flowers, together rise,
And the whole year in gay confusion lies.*

BUT, dear madam, what I had thought so permanent, proved but a flattering illusion, a shadowy prospect of felicity, formed only by my own sanguine imagination :—I had scarce began to taste the sweets of this solitude, before it lost that name, and became a theatre where people of all degrees appear, and act their several parts :—My hall is crowded with footmen, my drawing-room with persons of perhaps not a superior understanding :—My walks so formed for loneliness, seem now the mall in St. James's park in a hot summer's evening :—My arbors, my groves, resound with amorous tales, instead of pious ejaculations ; all is the reverse of what I intended :—Not only the neighbouring gentry, but those from distant countries, such as I never had the least acquaintance with, take the pretence of complimenting me on my fine taste, as they are pleased to term it :—Curiosity at first excites, and, as they say, a prodigious liking, some of one thing, some of another, obliges them to repeat their visits :—One admires the situation of my house, another the extensive prospect from the turret, a third is transported with my gardens, and thus to my very great misfortune, some part or other has a charm for every body.—I now find that I have been all this while labouring to purchase, at an infinite expence, what I would gladly double the sum to be rid of, and this indeed I might have known before, had I given myself liberty to reflect how seldom we see any thing in the end really advantageous, which we

have with too much eagerness pursued, how innocent soever it may be. As the poet truly says,

*So blind we are, our wishes are so vain,
That what we most desire, proves most our pain.*

I MIGHT have enjoyed that solitude I chose, had I contented myself with the old mansion house of my fore-fathers; but I must be elegantly rural, romantically solitary, and by my parade attract the gazers I intended to avoid.

You will certainly laugh at me, and I heartily deserve it; but this disappointment, dear as it hath cost me, has done me one very great piece of service, it has taught me the folly of setting my heart upon any one thing, and will I hope enable me for the future to check all those inordinate emotions of impatience and expedition, which, when indulged, give so much pain to the breast that entertains them, and may end in more disappointments of another kind.

I FLATTER myself, however, you will pity the inconveniencies in which my folly has involved me, and from which I have no way to extricate myself without being uncivil and unhospitable:—Winter and unpassable roads are all that can relieve me, but then I shall be equally unhappy in being deprived of those I wish to see, as I am at present in being compelled to see those I would avoid; so that in all seasons, and in all weathers, my condition is like to be uncomfortable enough: As I know your ill state of health will not permit you to take so long a journey, I beg that, as often as you are able to write, the post may bring

bring me assurances of the continuance of that friendship you have favoured me with, and which will always give the highest satisfaction to,

Madam,

Your most obliged servant,

CIAMARA.



EPISTLE LXV.

From ORIANA, to a gentleman who had courted her a long time, and was encouraged in his addresses, both by her parent and herself; but whom she was obliged to break off with, on account of some extraordinary obligations another, who demanded her in marriage, had conferred upon their family.

Sir,

I HAVE weighed in the balance of unbiassed justice, what duty to the best of parents demands from me, with what is owing to myself, and find the former, in spite of love, who with all his might strives to pull down the scale, extremely preponderates:—You are not unacquainted with the infinite obligations my father has to *Honorius*, when on a late unhappy occasion he was in danger of losing both his life and fortune; that generous man, that best of friends, stepped in between him and the offended laws, employed all his influence, all his credit, spared neither cost nor pains to rescue him from a fate which seemed inevitable:—Such a redemption from infamy and everlasting misery, surely, deserves the most

grateful acknowledgments of all our family; and can I, the child of the person thus preserved, alone be thankless for the bounty?—Can I remember my father's forlorn condition, my mother's agonies, the terrors and confusions of all my kindred, without remembering also by whom we were delivered from this scene of woe?—By whom it was that the direful prospect was reversed, and peace and joy substituted in its place? And ought not this remembrance to excite in me all the tenderness and good will a soul is capable of feeling? You are too generous not to confess this truth, tho' it is an enemy to those soft desires, which so long have mutually engrossed our hearts.—You cannot, you will not, I hope, complain that as my poor person is all the recompence demanded, or all in the power of a distressed family to offer, I have at last resolved to sacrifice love to pay the debt of gratitude and duty:—It was with extreme reluctance my father signified his pleasure to me on this score;—you would have pitied the struggles his honest heart endured between the sense of what he owed *Honorius*, and the promise he had made to you:—Scarce could he pronounce the dreadful command, that I must study to forget our loves, without tears; and I know not if a little opposition on my part would not have overcome his resolution.—But, *Philacles*, could I see him thus, without wishing to put an end to his anxieties?—No, I resolved rather to do the greatest violence to myself that nature could sustain, and at once yielded to receive *Honorius*, and excuse myself to you:—I told him also that I was certain you would rather pity than condemn the severe necessity we both were under; give no testimony that I was deceived in my opinion, I
conjure

conjure you by all the love you have profest for me, and by all the innocent marks you have received of mine ; — think of me as little as possible, as I have now promised, and shall sincerely endeavour to do of you : — My heart, alas ! and all its wishes, will shortly be the right of another ; let your's, therefore, seek out some happier object : — To resign chearfully those expectations which you have so often sworn made the whole happiness of your life, will prove you more the hero, than all the danger you have so gloriously faced in the field of battle.

I FLATTER myself I need not make it my request, that you will hereafter avoid coming into my sight : — You must know, that such a meeting would but add to our present distress, by reviving the remembrance of those happy hours we have past together : — It could not but be afflicting to you, and might render me utterly unable to act with decency the part I am determined to sustain : — I even desire you will send no answer to this, but look upon it as the last breathings of a passion which must now be dead, and for ever as effectually lost to you, as if the heart that harboured it, had ceased its vital motion.

I HAVE put all the written proofs I have received of your affection, into the hands of *Florinda*, who will shortly deliver them to you, and by whom I beg those I have given you of mine, may be returned : — Farewell, O *Philocles* ! — how hard it is to say, eternally farewell.

ORIANA.

P. S. I cannot close this without doing justice to your rival, by assuring you he was, and

is entirely ignorant of any pre-engagement my heart had entered into, and ought therefore to be absolved in your opinion, from the guilt of having endeavoured to supplant you in the affections of

ORIANA.



EPISTLE LXVI.

From the same to PHILOCLES, on hearing he had spoken disrespectfully of her in public company, and made a very great jest of her intended marriage with HONORIUS, intimating as if being forsaken by him, on some reasons he thought he had for so doing, she had laid hold on the first offer that presented itself.

Most ungenerous and unworthy man !

YOU have conferred an obligation on me, which I am well convinced it was not in your nature to intend.—You thought to blacken my reputation in the opinion of my friends, instead of which you have destroyed your own, and entirely cleared me from the guilt of inconstancy, if any there were who would have condemned my change:—But this is the least service you have done me; the discovery of your baseness has utterly extinguished in me all the remains of an affection, which perhaps, it would otherwise have been difficult in me to have extinguished:—I now thank heaven for having enabled me to resist the dictates of so mistaken a tenderness, and for defending me from falling into the hands of a man

so void of honour, justice, and even common decency:—You have now, I thank you, put it in my power to reward the affection and merits of *Honorius*, with a whole heart: In going with him to the altar I shall now feel no reluctance, no secret remorse, to cast a cloud on my brow, and render the sacred union but half compleat.

You, doubtless, imagine you have behaved extremely artful in this affair, and as your pride would not bear to have it said you had been forsaken by me, so you were willing also to avoid the censure of infidelity, by pretending you had mighty reasons for breaking off with me.—The falshood of this your letters will demonstrate, which I have desired *Florinda* not to part with, in order to defend my character from any imputations your malice, or your vanity, may attempt to brand it with.—You may expose mine, if you think proper.—They who read them will see I was deceived by an opinion of you which you little merited, and I flatter myself that all reasonable people will forgive an error which my youth and inexperience of mankind betrayed me into, especially as that good opinion was productive of no consequences in the least inconsistent with the strictest modesty and virtue.

It would indeed have been hard to have prevailed on me to give any credit to a story of such unparalleled baseness, had what you said at lady *Betty's* assembly, not only been affirmed by persons of unquestionable veracity, who were there, but also proved by the disrespectful, the almost contemptuous manner in which you treated my last letter, when delivered to you by *Florinda*; a letter dictated by a bleeding heart,

and blotted with the sincerest tears :—Perfidious and ungrateful wretch ! How ashamed am I to have ever thought you worthy of so tender a concern ! But your fair professions deceived my father, and might well impose on an artless maid :—I shall now endeavour to banish all remorse, as I have already done the tender folly that occasioned it, that I may have nothing to damp the satisfaction I ought to feel in having escaped the snares of the very worst of men, and being under the protection of the best.

HOWEVER, if any thoughts of you should hereafter float on my mind, as those we least desire to indulge will sometimes do, my resentment will be mixed with some share of pity, for your having, by such an inadvertent and ridiculous behaviour, discovered a baseness of disposition, which must for ever lose you the esteem of as many as shall know the injustice you have done to the injured

ORIANA.

End of the FIFTH BOOK.



EPISTLES.



EPISTLES.

BOOK VI.

EPISTLE LXVII.

From FLORELLA to CLARINDA, with a continuation of the story of ROSINDA, as began in the fourth book.

Dear CLARINDA,



TAKE the opportunity of the first post, to gratify the good-natured curiosity you express for the fate of poor *Rosinda*, but I know not whether you will think you have any reason to thank me for it, since I have nothing to inform you of, but accidents, which to hear of, must give an infinity of pain to a mind so generous as yours.

My last acquainted you, how that unfortunate young creature was deaf to all the arguments I could urge to bring her to a discovery of her real circumstances; but at last gratitude, for the favours I had conferred on her, as she said, prevailed to overcome the resolution she had taken of carrying that fatal secret to the grave: She told me, she would force herself, in obedience to my commands, to write the whole shock-

ing account of her misfortunes, being unable to give it me by word of mouth.

ACCORDING to her promise, the next day she presented me with a paper, conjuring me at the same time, that when I had considered the contents, I would afford her my advice and assistance to dispose of herself in some manner, so as never to be seen again by any one who had ever known her.—I told her she might depend on any thing in my power for her consolation, and retired to my closet to examine what she had wrote, which I found as follows.

The story of the undone ROSINDA.

“ *Madam,*

AS your ladyship is informed by *Philemon* of my birth, and the affairs of my family, till a few days before that appointed for my marriage with him, there is no occasion for my troubling you with the repetition:—O! would to heaven that all had ended there! That it had been the period of my life, and I had then slept with my dear parents, in innocence and peace!—But how unavailing are complaints,—my woes are past retrieve, and I am a wretch confirm’d!

“ *PHILEMON* has, doubtless, told you the price my uncle set upon me, and how his lavish love granted all was asked of him; but he knew not with what little satisfaction his compliance was received by the person who exacted it:—As I was far from imagining the horrid motive, I have often been amazed at this extraordinary, and indeed unreasonable care of my interest in a man, who was allied to me only by his marriage with my aunt, and even she,



she, though partial enough in her affection for me, thought, that in my precarious situation, the offers of *Philemon* sufficiently advantageous, without that extravagant settlement he had agreed to.—Alas! I have since a dreadful reason to know it was never expected from him, and that my inhuman uncle proposed it with no other view, than to break the match, as the sequel of my unhappy story will but too plainly evince.—I was, however, too much taken up with my tenderness for *Philemon*, and the preparations for our nuptials, to give much attention to any thing else, and was now so far from suspecting there could be any impediment to my happiness, that I looked upon it no less certain, than if already accomplished.

“ THERE wanted not above four days to that in which my hand was to be given to him who had been long in possession of my heart, when my aunt received a letter, acquainting her, that a beloved son she had at board about fifteen miles from *London*, was taken ill of the small-pox, on which she went directly to him, accompanied by a physician and her woman:—As she could not propose coming back the same day, my uncle promised to go the next morning and fetch her:—You will, doubtless, madam, think this incident of little importance to the story you expect from me, yet was it of the greatest, and had it not happened, it would have been impossible for me to have been the wretch I am.

“ *PHILEMON*, who never failed seeing me every day, supped at our house that night, and my uncle, in complaisance to us both, as

he pretended, would not go out as his wife was absent.—He treated *Philemon* with an extraordinary civility, but seemed more pensive than usual, which I imputed to his concern for my little cousin's indisposition. I was not long, however, in a condition to take much notice of any thing, for the cloth was scarce taken away before such an excessive drowsiness fell on me, that I had all the difficulty imaginable to keep my eye-lids from closing.—*Philemon* observing it, took his leave, and the moment he was gone, I begged my uncle's permission to retire, and made all the haste I could to bed, where I was no sooner laid, than I fell into a profound sleep; had heaven been pleased that it had been my last; but oh! too soon I awaked! awaked to eternal miseries and shame!—Imagination sickens at the remembrance!—A thousand horrors rise to my distracted mind, and drive me to despair!—Swift let me hasten to the shocking period; I found myself close lock'd in the arms of a man! At first I thought it was a dream, and struggled to be more awake, and throw off the odious idea; but oh! my ruin was too real, and the author of it my perfidious uncle.—In that instant of my fury I would have broke from his grasp, and with my cries raised all that were in the house to have been witnesses of his villainy, but alas! I could do neither the one nor the other; all the strength I could muster up, was infinitely too feeble when opposed to his, and he took care to muffle me so in the bedcloaths, that my voice could not be heard, so was in spite of all my efforts, obliged not only to remain the helpless wretched victim of his base desires, but also to hear the impudent defence he made for his proceedings!—O let the name of love henceforth

forth be held in detestation,—let it never be pronounced by any virtuous youth, or modest virgin, since so abhorred a monster made it his plea for the undoing the innocence he was bound by all the laws of God and man to have protected.

“HE confessed to me, that he had long formed the design he now had taken the opportunity of my aunt’s absence to perpetrate; that she had no sooner left the house than he procured a sleeping potion, which, unseen by any body, he had mingled in a cup of wine and water, out of which I was always accustomed to drink.

“DAY-BREAK at length released me from his loathed society; but need I tell you, madam, the dreadful images that reflection on what had past, presented to my tortured brain.—The remembrance of the faithful, the generous *Philemon*, that which the day before made all my joy, was now my curse;—his disappointment, my own irremediable ruin, the uncertainty in what manner I should behave, gave me a said variety of anguish:—When I thought of seeking some means of revenge, the shock of exposing my own shame, together with my uncle’s wickedness, deterred me; besides, I knew not to what lengths such a discovery might transport my poor aunt, who is but too fond of this unworthy husband; so that on the whole, I resolved to keep the fatal secret to myself; but how to conduct myself in doing so, was the extremest difficulty: It was not in nature to find a pretence for breaking with *Philemon*;—and to continue in the house and in the presence of my barbarous undoer; to wear an enforced civility to him in public, and whenever any opportunity offered,

to

to be liable to a second abuse, struck fresh horrors to my soul; in fine, the more I weighed the circumstances of my situation, the more I was confounded in my purposes:—As I could not, however, bear the sight of *Philemon*, whom I still loved with an excess of passion, and to whom I was for ever lost, I feigned myself indisposed and kept my bed:—My aunt on her return was extremely concerned to find me in the condition I pretended:—*Philemon* was inconsolable at being refused admittance to my chamber, all my acquaintance were persecuting me with messages to enquire after my health, but above all I was perplexed with my wicked uncle, who having the privilege of coming to my bed-side, would, even in his wife's presence, take hold of my hand, as to feel my pulse, and press it between his, and many other actions, which by those in the room were taken for parental tenderness, but which I too well knew the odious meaning of:—Every thing contributed to render my continuing where I was insupportable to me, yet how, or where to go, I knew not;—for three days I continued in agitations not to be expressed, and should have continued so yet longer, had not my aunt talked of consulting a physician on my account, the apprehensions that he would discover the feint I had made use of, determined me to go privately away from that detested house, and get into some place of concealment, no matter where, so I escaped the sight of all who knew me;—accordingly I rose in the night, packed up the few jewels I was mistress of, and what other things I could carry in a bundle, and opening the door as softly as I could, got out before any of the family was stirring:—As mine was not a condition

tion, to admit of making any confident, I would go to none of my acquaintance, but went to the water-side and got into the first boat I found. — I made the fellows row to *Greenwich*, where I went into a house rather to consider what course I should now take, than for any refreshment, though indeed I stood in need of it. — After some little time of reflection, I thought it would be the surest way to disappoint the search which I knew would be made for me, to get over to *France*; accordingly I hired a barge, for the *Gravesend* boat, which usually carries passengers, was gone off: — When I arrived there, I was informed no ship was ready to sail for any of the ports of *France*; this intelligence at first alarmed me, but I immediately after found a little coasting vessel bound for —, just going out: — It was indifferent to me whither I went, provided I was far enough from pursuit, and as I knew nobody in this whole country, it was not likely I should be sought here; your steward has doubtless made you acquainted with what followed, till I had the honour of being presented to you, with whom I have tasted so much ease and content, as rendered me almost forgetful of my misfortune, till *Philemon*, becoming unhappily a guest here, renewed the memory with double force: — I had forgot to mention, that not being able to quit him for ever, without a last farewell, which I sent by a porter I picked up in the street, I know not whether he received it; if he did, I doubt not but he has acquainted you with the contents.

“ THESE, most dear and honoured madam, are all the particulars of my unhappy fate, and such as I believe you will own, must for ever
render

render me unworthy of the felicity I once thought myself so near possessing:—Pity is all the consolation can now be afforded to the betrayed and ruined

“ ROSINDA.”

JUDGE, my dear *Clarinda*, how much I have been affected with this sad relation; Sir *John*, to whom I communicated it, bears a part with me:—*Philemon* is yet a stranger to it, and shall be, unless I can get her consent for that purpose, which I do not absolutely despair of, as I have endeavoured to convince her, that the suspense he labours under is more afflicting, and may be even of worse consequence, than the cruel certainty:—A few days will, doubtless, put some period to the whole adventure, which I will not fail to acquaint you with; in the mean time, could not omit letting you into as much of it as I was mistress of myself:—Adieu, I have time to add no more at present than that I am, with an unfeigned sincerity, my dear *Clarinda*,

Yours, &c.

FLORELLA.



EPISTLE LXVIII.

From FLORELLA to CLARINDA, with the sequel of the story of PHILEMON and ROSINDA.

Dear CLARINDA,



CAN now give you the sequel of a story which is indeed too interesting not to justify all the impatience you express.—Poor *Rosinda* has at length come to a resolution, and taken that part, which,
in

in her irremediable misfortune, she thought was most befitting her. — But you shall judge whether she has not strained honour to a pitch too high, in acting as she has done.

THE distraction *Philemon* was in, to be under the same roof with his beloved *Rosinda*, yet he denied the sight of her, or even the knowledge of the reason wherefore he was so, gave me a great deal of anxiety; but I had given my word to *Rosinda*, and would not communicate what she had entrusted to me, without her permission: When I represented to her the condition he was in, and set before her eyes the fatal effects so cruel a suspense might occasion, she wept bitterly, and told me, that nothing prevented her from consenting he should be made acquainted with the shocking circumstance of her undoing, but the fears that the love he had for her would make him revenge her wrongs upon her wicked uncle: — *Much*, said she, *I owe to the tenderness and generosity of Philemon; but I owe also much to that maternal care my dear aunt has always taken of me: — She doats upon that monster of mankind*, continued she, *and I am certain could not support with life the knowledge of his crime, much less the punishment it deserves, and which Philemon would not be restrained, by any considerations, from inflicting on him.*

I FOUND so much weight in this argument, that I said no more to her at that time; but the despair of *Philemon*, and Sir *John's* incessant importunities on that score, made me repeat all I had urged before, and add all I could to exaggerate the truth; which was indeed but little, for certainly there could not be a greater object
of

of pity, than the passionate and despairing lover, whose cause I took upon me to plead; which at last I did with such success, that she consented I should shew him the paper she had given me, on condition I first enacted a solemn vow from him to keep the contents an inviolable secret from all the world, and whatever resentment he might conceive against the person mentioned therein, to restrain it from breaking out by any words or actions whatsoever.

THERE needed, indeed, no less than the obligation she required, to have kept *Philemon* from revenging her cause in the manner she so much apprehended, for though he gave me the oath I insisted on, with readiness enough, as being doubtless far from imagining of what nature the secret was he was going to be entrusted with, yet he had no sooner read it, than after the most dreadful execrations against the ravisher, he confessed, that not all the vows words could form would have been sufficient to have bound him from letting loose all his fury on the villain's head, were he yet in a condition to feel the effects of it. — But, said he, *he is gone to receive the reward of his wickedness in another world; — I have just now received a letter, which gives me an account of his death.*

You cannot imagine, my dear *Clarinda*, how glad I was to hear this; I ran immediately to acquaint *Rosinda* with it, who lifted up her hands and eyes, crying, *heaven, thou art just!* — I was beginning to relate to her how *Philemon* had behaved on reading the paper I gave him, when he came into the room; for I had omitted laying him under the injunction I had been accustomed
to

to do, not to attempt seeing her without her leave.

SHE seemed, however, less disconcerted than I expected at his presence, which, when I perceived, made me not sorry at the liberty he had taken, being not a little desirous to see in what manner he would accost her after the knowledge of her misfortune.—She prevented what he intended to say, by crying out as soon as he appeared;—*Well, Philemon, you will not now condemn my flying from you?*—*As much as ever,* replied he, *since it was unjust to make me suffer for the fault of another.*—As she made no immediate answer to these words, he proceeded to assure her, that the involuntary violation she had sustained, had not in the least abated either his love or esteem, and that as she had once resolved to make him happy, he hoped she would banish all ideas that might forbid his being so.—*No,* said she, hastily interrupting him, *I was unworthy, infinitely unworthy of you in my days of innocence, much more as I am now.*—She then told him, that she had determined to seclude herself from the world, and go into a convent, where the little fortune she was mistress of, would maintain her as a pensioner.—It would be too tedious, if my memory would permit, to repeat all the arguments he made use of, to prevail on her to be more just to him and herself:—All that love and good sense could dictate, was exerted on this score, but neither at that time; nor ever after, could she be won by his grief, or the persuasions of Sir John and myself, to recede from her declaration:—Never did I see such steadiness and strength of resolution in so young a heart.

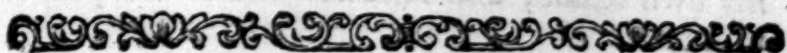
PHILEMON was at last obliged to desist his unavailing importunities, though with what emotions you may guess by the proofs he had given how sincerely and passionately his soul doated on her:—To comply with her request, Sir *John* got her a passage in the first ship that went to *Boulogne*, and a recommendation to the convent of *English* nuns, where a letter I just now received from her acquaints me she is arrived, and received with all imaginable kindness. Her lover took his leave of us the next day after her departure, in order to lose, if possible, the memory of what has past, in travel through foreign parts:—Nothing could equal the agonies he was in at taking his last farewell of *Rosinda*; she too, I believe, felt her share, in spite of all the heroism she assumed.

Now, in my opinion, all this distress might have been spared:—The wretch who had abused her was gone to answer, in another world, the base action he had been guilty of in this: The violation of her person, left no guilt upon her mind; that still was chaste and pure:—Her lover regarded her as still the same, and to render both herself and him unhappy, appears to me an over-delicacy of sentiment. I long to hear what you will say upon the subject, and will not entirely fix my judgment, till I have the pleasure of yours. I am, with the most sincere and perfect amity, my dear *Clarinda*,

Yours, &c.

FLORELLA.

EPISTLE



EPISTLE LXIX.

STELLA to EUSEBIA, *acquainting her with her recovery from a dangerous fit of sickness, and the change it had made in her way of thinking.*

Dear madam,

OME few days past, had I been born the heiress of empire, gladly would I have resigned my pretensions, and yielded up the glittering prospect for the more valuable assurance of enjoying once again the happiness of writing to you.—The sacred rites of a departing soul had been administered to me:—I saw my mother's anguish, my father's tears, I heard the solemn sentence of my immediate dissolution pronounced by the physician who attended me, and felt that within myself which more than all confirmed me in the belief that I was going to make my everlasting exit from this world.—O what did I not for some hours endure!—The pains which had reduced me to this condition were no longer felt; all lost and swallowed up in the more dreadful agonies of the mind!—How did I wish, how pray but for one day's reprieve?—My remissness in reflecting on the fate that now seemed just falling on me, all my youthful vanities came fresh into my mind, and were now so many scorpions which stung me to the very soul:—Every pleasure, every amusement I had with so much eagerness pursued, now reproached me with a wretched waste of time,—with sinning against
my

my own reason, and rendered me contemptible to myself.

IN the midst of these terrible ideas I fell at once into a slumber, as it appeared to me on coming out of it, but all those about me say it was a convulsion fit; but whatever it may be called, it certainly was the last effort of my malady. — Nature in me struggled hard, and at length got the better of her enemy, or rather the Great Author of nature was pleased to listen to my ardent vows, and snatch me from the grasp of death. — I came to myself, when every one believed me gone for ever. O thou Great Supreme! whose mercy just saved me sinking into eternity's tremendous gulf, vouchsafe to keep me ever grateful for the bounty: Let the kind chastisement I have felt dwell on my mind, and warn me of my duty, that, whenever the determined date of life is expired, I may receive the inevitable fiat without horror.

*Teach my best reason, reason; my best will
Teach rectitude; and fix my firm resolve
Wisdom to wed, and pay her long arrears;
Nor let the phial of thy vengeance, pour'd
On this devoted head, be pour'd in vain.*

YES, madam, death, in holding the mirror of futurity before me, gave me at the same time a retrospect on what I was going to leave behind me; and, ah! how little worthy of attention did this world appear, when stript of those false colours which our imagination puts upon it: — All seemed a dull, ill-acted farce, where some scenes were shocking, some ridiculous, and the best but insignificant and trifling.

IF there be any thing like real happiness below, it is in friendship, and the conversation of such as can discern the *true* blessings of life from the *counterfeit*; can discover through all their tinsel covering, the innate worthlessness of the greatest part of all sublunary enjoyments. Such who are incapable of flattery themselves, and know how to despise it in others:—Such who love and revere virtue, in the most abject garb, and can treat vice as it deserves, though clad in purple robes:—Such who are equally the enemies of business and of ceremony, and alike fly the hurry of *Change-Alley*, and the formalities of the drawing-room; and finally, such who, truly sensible they have a glorious *home* to which they shall one day be called, behold, with unconcern, whatever events may happen to them at the *inn* where they at present sojourn.

You will say, that if I confine myself only to persons of this class, I shall keep but very little company:—They are indeed rarely to be met with, and, if more numerous, could not hope that many would fall to my share; but that is a misfortune I ought not to regret, as I am sure of one at least in the excellent *Eusebia*. My greatest concern is, that you may imagine this change in my way of thinking is more owing to vapours, which my late indisposition may have occasioned, than to a real and confirmed sense of my duty, in what is owing to heaven, and myself; it is time and perseverance that can alone convince you of the contrary; I will not—I dare not presume to say, I am enough assured of my own heart, to tell you it is an utter impossibility for me to relapse into any part of those follies, which have too much employed my former years:—
This

This however I may aver, that my conversion is at present sincere; to make it permanent I rely on heaven, and the charitable assistance of those friends who wish me well.

I LONG with the utmost impatience for your return, and am not afraid that the testifying that impatience will in the least break through the scheme I have determined to pursue, of not being over-anxious for any thing in this life, because I am very certain, your conversation will enable me to deserve a better:—Hasten, therefore, I beseech you, to strengthen the resolutions I have formed; for though I had always an extreme love and veneration for you, both are now greatly increased, since the Almighty Dispenser of all blessings has been graciously pleased to inspire me with sentiments and inclinations more conformable to yours.

THOUGH I have had no returns of my fever, since the dreadful time I mentioned in the beginning of this letter, when I believe it entirely left me, and am now, I think, perfectly recovered, they will not as yet suffer me to quit my chamber:—Your niece, the amiable *Euphrosine*, has been so good to pass an hour or two with me every day throughout the whole time of my confinement.—As I have her, I the less miss her aunt, but in my present situation, in spite of my boasted resolution, have need enough of you both to shield me from the thousand temptations my launching out again into the world may involve me in:—You see I am far from placing too much dependance on my own abilities, which, I flatter myself, you will look upon as a good sign in, dear madam, your most affectionate friend,

STELLA.

EPISTLE



EPISTLE LXX.

From CALISTO to LUCILLA, confessing her passion for ALEXIS, how far she had suffered it to get the better of her virtue, and that she was now converted, by the arguments and example of her lover; with an earnest exhortation that she would not, if compelled to marry against her inclination, ever be prevailed upon to violate those sacred ties.

Dear LUCILLA,

YOU are surprized at not hearing from me in so many days:—You kindly chide my remissness, and enjoin me to let you into the secret that has occasioned it:—A secret indeed, and, you may believe a strange one, that could render me for half that time forgetful of our friendship; but I am now again myself, and have the power of complying with your desire, which I shall do without reserve, how shameful soever the confession may be to myself.

My last gave you an account, that I had seen *Alexis* by accident; my pen I know was lavish in his praise, but fell infinitely short of the dictates of my heart; he entertained, he talked to me with a politeness peculiar to himself, but seemed not to distinguish me from the other ladies in company, by any particular address; yet did this first, this fatal interview, produce in me emotions I had never known before:—In fine, I was in love, distractedly in love, as you will

soon perceive, and might then say with *Leonora* in the play ;

*I've loved away myself,—in one short hour
Already am I gone an age of passion.*

NIGHT and day my head ran on him, I had no pleasure in any conversation that did not turn on him :—I hated all who did not admire him, and was jealous of all who did :—I haunted all the public places he frequented ; whenever I saw him I was filled with new languishments, new sensations of a nature I cannot well describe ; and when I saw him not, came home in such a sullen, peevish humour, as, I believe, made my servants imagine my brain turned, for I quarrelled with every thing about me :—No chance, however, brought me again into his company for near a month, though I often sought, and ardently wished it.—At last, being in a public walk, with some ladies of wit and pleasantry who were known to him, he immediately joined us, and happening to be in a gayer humour than when I first saw him, promoted a conversation the most gallant and spirituous that can be imagined :—But would you think it, *Lucilla*, I was utterly incapable of joining in it :—My heart fluttered, my whole frame was in agitations, all my faculties in a hurry, and though I had longed with the utmost passion for such an opportunity, yet now, when fortune threw it in my way, had not the power of making use of it to my advantage. Instead of displaying the little talents I had received from nature, I behaved like a creature bred in a village ; whenever he directed his discourse to me, as he frequently did, I blushed, hung down my head, stammered when

when I spoke, and in short, appeared so very silly, that had he not afterwards been but too well convinced of the true cause of my seeming stupidity, I must till now have passed in his opinion for a perfect idiot.—The other ladies, however, being under no such enchantment, generally took up the discourse where he dropt it, and gave him so full employment for his talent of repartee, that he had not time to afford me much attention;—and I found afterwards, that he had never said any thing to them concerning me, or even enquired who I was.

THIS second meeting served to complete the destruction of those remains of reason the former had left in me:—I could neither eat, sleep, or rest in any one place,—I sigh'd all night,—I languished all day,—a thousand romantic ideas rose in my brain, I wanted to be in some disguise that I might be always near him; I would have preferred the meanest office about his person, to being empress of the globe:—Never was infatuation equal to mine, yet, believe me, I had not all this while one wish injurious to virtue:—My desires were violent, but not unchaste, the utmost of my longings extended no farther than such embraces as a sister might allow a brother; and oh, what would I not have given to have enjoyed that innocent delight! You will tell me, perhaps, I know little of the passion I was possessed of; it is true, I did so, but I assure you this was, at that time, the condition of my heart.

BUT I should write you a book instead of a letter, were I to repeat the thousandth part of all my tender follies; I will therefore trouble you

with no more, but come to the crisis of my fate, the little expected consequence of the mighty preparation love had made in my unguarded heart.

A LADY of quality, with whom I have been extremely intimate ever since my arrival, took me to a masquerade, where only persons of the first rank were admitted:—The assembly was numerous and brilliant, the habits sparkling, and I took care mine should not be the least elegant, not knowing but *Alexis* might be there, whom I did not doubt of discovering in whatever shape he appeared, and flattered myself with being able, in a mask, to entertain him in somewhat of a more assured manner than I had courage to do bare-faced:—I was not deceived in the former part of my conjecture; he was there, and my heart soon told me which was he: Indeed, the fineness of his person made him easily distinguished from all others, but alas! though I had prepared in my mind some things to say to him, which I thought would have engaged his attention, when I approached him had not the power of uttering a single syllable:—He two or three times accosted me, but finding I made other sort of replies than might be expected in such a place, soon quitted me for conversation more enlivening:—He once took hold of my hand, in order to join in a dance just then leading up, but this sudden touch set me in such a trembling and disorder, that, fearing I should faint, I quitted the room that instant in order to recover myself.—There were several rooms in the gallery which led to the ball-room, all illuminated for any person to retire into; I went into one, and seeing a couch at the upper end, thrēw

threw myself upon it, full of confusion for the foolish figure I had made.—But, oh heaven! what was my condition, when presently I saw *Alexis* enter with his vizard in his hand, and threw the door after him, which having a spring-bolt, was immediately made fast.—He had retired to take some little respite from the hurry of the masquerade, and perceived not any one was there till he was very near the couch:—He started at seeing me, and begged my pardon for his intrusion, on which I was about to rise, but he would not permit me, saying, he would retire himself. This, I thought, I ought to oppose, in point of common manners, and there arose a little dispute between us, which should remain in possession of the place:—I had by this time, however, got upon my legs, and was drawing ~~towards the door, when he stepped between, and laying his two hands upon my shoulders,~~ madam, cried he, I must not suffer that, if you will not permit me to leave you as I found you, give me leave to share with you in that relaxation I suppose you came to indulge.—I was now so overcome with inward convulsions, at finding myself so near him, that I could make no answer to his last words, nor stir a step either backwards or forwards, but stood trembling like a bird just caught:—I found he looked on me with surprise, and mistaking the true reason of my tremblings, You seem, madam, said he, to be under apprehensions, which it is my duty to remove by instantly retiring; all the advantage I shall take of finding so agreeable a lady alone, is the favour of a salute; I still was silent, and attempted not to prevent his doing as he said; the kiss he gave me ran through my soul,—my head turned round,—I knew not where I was,—all my con-

fusion redoubled, and, unable to sustain the surprise, I fainted and fell upon his breast.—My senses, however, were not so entirely lost as not to tell me what he did,—I found he took me in his arms with the extremest tenderness, and set me gently down, then with a penknife he had in his pocket, ript the lacing of the habit I had on, in order to give me air.—I opened my eyes, and saw his were fixed upon me.—Do you fear me, madam? said he; No, replied I, but I fear,—What? resumed he, taking one of my hands, and tenderly pressing it between both his:—This action was again more than I could bear,—my senses once more half forsook me, and unknowing what I did, I threw the hand I had at liberty upon his breast, and sighed and looked (as recollection since assures me) in such a manner as might well convince him, if he were not ~~so before~~ ^{in order} he beheld proceeded:—With transport, equal to his surprise, he seemed to receive the discovery, and pressed my lips with ardour not to be expressed; it is with shame I own, I had no power that moment to make the least resistance, but suffered myself to be held in a strenuous embrace, while kisses were the only language that passed between us;—at length I broke from his arms, but it was only to burst into exclamations which had nothing of resentment in them:—I am betrayed, cried I, the long-hid secret of my soul is betrayed to him, to him from whom of all the world it ought to have been eternally concealed:—O what has one unguarded moment done?—Shew me, interrupted he, that I am more happy than any man can merit to be;—repent not, my angel, of the soft confession. The last accents of these words were printed on my breast, on which

which shame, at seeing myself exposed, brought me to a glympse of reason :—I now made some few feint efforts to repel his pressures :—Leave me, cryed I, O *Alexis*, leave me to blush alone, and die with shame ; go, I conjure you, go ; yet still, without being sensible I did so, held him fast with both my hands.—I saw him smile ;—If love demands a blush, said he, let us blush together.—We had all this time been only sitting upright on the couch, but he clasping me again between his arms, and joining his breast, his lips to mine, I could no more dissemble a reluctance, no more make a shew of struggling, but sunk with him quite down :—I need not tell you what ensued.

AFTER what had passed, all reserve was banished :—I diverted him with the extravagancies of my passion, related to him the whole progress of it, and all the little whims that had come into my head for following him in some shape or other, so as to be near his person ; told him how much I had languished for an opportunity of speaking to him, and reminded him how incapable I had been of doing so whenever he approached :—A narrative, which tho' he seemed charmed with, he could not forbear frequently interrupting, by crying, how many blissful moments have we lost ; but the *future* must pay the omission of the *past* :—Then would he press me to his bosom,—gaze on me, as if each look were to be his last :—I, equally inspired, returned his ardours with interest,—till the noise of somebody trying to open the door, reminded us that it was possible we might be missed by our respective friends :—We then agreed to separate ;—I was too much disconcerted to return to the

ball, so resolved to go down and steal into a chair as privately as I could, while he went in and joined the company. It was now time for him to ask where we should meet again; I told him at my own lodgings, and having that very day received a letter from my lord, tore off the direction, and gave it to him to prevent any mistake, which he carefully put into his pocket-book.

THUS we yielded to the cruel necessity of tearing ourselves asunder, and having appointed the next evening for re-enjoying one another's company, we were now obliged to part; he retired to the company, and I came home, as yet too much charmed to regret the sacrifice I had been making.—The high birth, the amiable qualifications, the enchanting person, the whole world's admiration of my lovely conqueror, I thought a sanction for my yielding, which justified dishonour; nay I know not whether I was not infatuated enough to glory in my undoing as a merit, and rank my crime in the catalogue of venial sins.

THE present tranquility of my mind, eased of the burden it had so long sustained, and the many restless nights I had endured, made me sleep so profoundly, that I awoke not till the day was far advanced.—I rose full of a thousand pleasing images, little suspecting the horrors I was soon to encounter:—*Love*, that had betrayed me into *guilt*, gave me no warning of the dreadful *punishment* attending it, but suffered my fate to rush upon me at once, and despair, with all its black attendants, to take me by surprize.—I was scarce drest when my woman presented a letter to me, which she said was left for me by a footman in

a rich livery, which, on her describing, I knew must be that of *Alexis*:—My heart fluttered when I opened it, was apprehensive some accident had happened to delay the happiness I expected, for an hour or two beyond the appointed time, or perhaps the whole evening; this would have been a disappointment my fond impatient heart could but have ill supported;—judge, then, what became of me, when I found the contents were as follow.

To the too amiable Calista.

“ FULL of the joys I had possessed, and already panting to renew them, the moment I
“ came home, my greedy eyes devoured the dear
“ direction to my expected scene of bliss. But
“ happening to turn the other side of the paper,
“ I found *affectionate husband*, with the name of
“ *Altamont* subscribed.—O heaven! how deadly
“ a damp did these few words cast on my warm
“ desires! I shuddered at the injustice I had been
“ guilty of:—What! my *Calista* married?—
“ cried I, a wife!—Have I been rifling another’s
“ treasures?—Basely stealing those kisses,
“ those embraces, all those nameless blessings
“ which marriage had before made the sole
“ property of another!—O *Calista*, what have
“ we done!—To what a crime have we been
“ betrayed by youth and nature? Think too,
“ charming woman, think you are a *wife*!—
“ Think on the vows you made before the altar,
“ and let the remembrance of them hereafter,
“ secure you from all the approaches of unlawful
“ love.—You are not, alas! the mistress of
“ yourself, you have nothing to bestow, all that
“ you are is *Altamont*’s, nor dare I, now I know
“ his right, invade it. Would heaven forgive

“ the violation, the laws of society and of ho-
 “ nour, forbid us ever to meet again.—Break
 “ therefore through the sweet enchantment by
 “ which we both were seized, and return to
 “ virtue and those joys which *Hymen* warrants :
 “ —For me, I shall endeavour, though difficult
 “ the task, to banish from my mind all memory
 “ of those transporting moments we passed toge-
 “ ther, since as I cannot think on them without
 “ *pleasure*, neither can I without *guilt*.—Pity,
 “ but vouchsafe no more to

ALEXIS.”

MADNESS, *Lucilla*, the most raving madness,
 was short of what I felt in the first shock this
 cruel billet give me :—I imagined it proceeded
 from disgust, that something in my person or
 behaviour had been less pleasing than he pre-
 tended, and accused him of deceit, perfidiousness,
 ingratitude ; branded his character with every
 epithet the fury of a disappointed woman could
 invent ; for I could not presently believe a sense
 of virtue, in an affair of this nature, could in
 his sex, and at his years, be carried to so high
 a pitch ; but when I reflected on that wild ex-
 uberance of transport he had received, and those
 furious emotions, with which even our last em-
 brace was accompanied, I found they had all
 been such as no false or lukewarm inclination
 could have feigned.—My resentment then ceased,
 and the most poignant grief succeeded ;—awhile
 I gave a loose to tears and complainings, but at
 length some glimmerings of hope darted upon
 my mind, and abated my despair : I fancied, if
 I could but once more see him, I should be able
 still to allure him back to love, and triumph
 over all his boasted virtue and resolution.—

Alas,

Alas, I wickedly judged of him by myself. — I lost no time in making an experiment, so flattering to my wishes. — I wrote to him in terms which I thought it would be in the power of no man, who had the least affection, to resist: — I assured him that my marriage had not been the effect of choice; that though a *wife*, he had my *virgin* heart; and begged to see him once more, even though he brought with him only the cool affection of a brother: in fine, I omitted nothing that the extremest love, grief, and despair, could in their different turns enable me to urge. — This I sent by a servant, who after waiting a considerable time for an answer, at last brought word, that *Alexis* would wait on me in the evening. — I now half assured myself of conquest, I thought I knew enough of his constitution to depend on his relapsing into love and fond desire, on seeing me in all that height of mingled grief and desperation, which I too truly felt to take any pains to display.

My inward agitations did not hinder me from taking all imaginable care to make my outward form as agreeable as possible: Having dressed myself in the most becoming negligence, I passed the time till his approach in consulting my glass, and practising every captivating look: At length he came, I received him in my bed-chamber, pretending the disorder his letter had involved me in, would not permit me to quit it. He frankly told me, he expected no less effects from what he had wrote, but conjured me to consider how necessary it was for my future peace I should confess the justice of it. Should we, said he, indulge the gratification of this guilty flame for the present, it could not be of long continuance; —

our criminal endearments must break off in time ; — it is not in the nature of things that we can always be together ; — you must one day return to your native country, to your friends, and to your husband ; and if even you would quit all for love, my affairs may oblige me to marry ; — a thousand other accidents might part us ; — amours of this kind must be transient, — they ever were, and ever will be so. Had you indeed been free from any other engagement, we might have gratified our mutual inclination while convenience permitted us to do so, and the soft error might have found excuse ; but, madam, continued he, I never can be guilty knowingly of violating a husband's rights.

I, **SUFFERED** him to go on in this manner without interruption, but the coldness of his expressions struck me to the heart, and beginning now again to think this prudence in him sprung merely from a want of love, burst at last into reproaches little becoming of me, or the resolution I had formed : — How much you wrong me, replied he, heaven and my heart is witness ; — nothing but the sincerest good wishes for the re-establishment of your peace of mind, should have prevailed upon me to expose myself to the temptations of seeing you again : — May I then believe you do not hate me, cried I, weeping ? — Could I be capable of such ingratitude, replied he, as not to love you, it would be a sin equal to indulging that love in opposition to the dictates of reason and of honour. — Fain would I have found some arguments to confute what he had said, but there were in nature none ; my soul avowed the justice of his reasoning, and I could only tell him, I could not live if banished from

from his presence; that with this passion, this languishment about me, I never could think of returning to a husband, who was always *indifferent*, and now *hateful* to me, and such stuff, which shewed rather the violence of my love, than the force of my understanding. I could see, however, a certain tenderness in his eyes, which made me hope, his heart was not unaffected by my despair.—I have reason, indeed, to think it was so, though he forbore any farther testimonies, and entreating I would attend to what he had to say with patience, began to display the folly and danger of suffering ourselves to be guided by guilty or inconvenient passions, with so much eloquence, that I was presently convinced, even in spite of myself:—While expatiating on the beauty of virtue, and the sweet content which rises from a consciousness of doing well, I thought an angel spoke,—seraphic energy flowed in each charming accent,—all heaven was in his voice,—and while he uttered what sacred truth inspired, the divinity of his morals seemed to brighten all his aspect, celestial glories darted from his eyes, and thrilled my soul with pure and hallowed fires, far different from those I had so lately felt:—I now looked on him as a superior being divested of the gross sensations of flesh and blood; the passion I had for his person was now converted into an adoration of his precepts; I threw myself at his feet, bathing them with tears of true contrition, and blest the virtue which recovered me from guilt and shame.—But, O *Lucilla*, see the transition!—this angelic preacher was very near being incapable himself of practising the doctrine he had taught,—he raised me with indeed no more than a brotherly affection, but in kissing

sing off the tears which still hung upon my cheeks, began to deviate from his sublimity, and fall into meer man.—As I was every thing he pleased to make me, and my conversion yet weak and unestablished, I sympathized in the relapse, and returned his pressures with more warmth than became a saint; on which he, sensible of the danger, tore himself away, crying O, it is too much for nature to sustain, farewell, too charming of your sex, farewell for ever.—With these words, he shot out of the room, leaving me to blush at my weakness, and reflect with amazement on his transcendent virtue.

IF to have the entire command of oneself be the greatest proof of heroism, *Alexis* must surely be allowed to excel all precedent.—Bred up in all the gallantries of a luxurious court, and skilled in every art to please, yet at the age of two and twenty, thus tempted by me and his own amorous emotions, had strength and resolution to break through the excitements of youth and nature, even in the moment they most demanded gratification.

THIS glorious example I am endeavouring to imitate. I quitted the town the very next day, and went to a village about twenty miles off, but my unsettled thoughts suffered me to continue there but three days; from thence I came to ****, where I now am, and expect the favour of a letter from you, but you must write soon, or it will be in danger of missing me; for I cannot flatter myself with being able yet awhile to remain long in any one place;—this I am certain of, that it will be a long time before I shall have the happiness of seeing you, without
you

you had friendship enough to take a voyage to me, for as to my return, I know not when, or whether I shall ever bring myself to see again a husband whom I cannot love, and am conscious I have injured.

LET my example be of this advantage to you, dear *Lucilla*, to avoid, if possible, becoming a *wife*, without being first a *lover*, to secure your heart from any future impressions; but if your hard fate, and the will of unrelenting parents, should compel your inclinations, think not yourself at liberty after that to make any other choice. — *Alexis* has convinced me, that marriage-vows are not less binding because forced: — The violation of them is unpardonable by heaven and mankind, all good angels forsake the transgressing wife, and the contempt of the world pursues her steps: — Her family, her friends, look on her as their shame, she is the ridicule of her acquaintance, and, in the end, scarce pitied by her seducer.

BUT these are exhortations which I dare believe you will stand in little need of; love is of a nature so insinuating, that the strictest virtue may sometimes call for example and remonstrances to guard against its encroachments; mine at least will be of no prejudice, and I am certain will be looked upon by you as well meant, and proceeding from the sincerest good wishes that your lot may be as happy as mine is miserable. — I live in a dismal solitude; no conversation but my own disturbed thoughts; the oftner therefore you write, and the longer your epistles are, the more welcome they will be. If you can find nothing to alleviate my shame, for
having

having departed from the path of virtue, congratulate my return to it, and assist me in the perseverance. Adieu, I fear I have tired you with these tedious particulars, and it is time now to conclude with subscribing myself,

My dear *Lucilla*, yours, &c.

CALISTA.



EPISTLE LXXI.

[*In answer to the foregoing.*]

From LUCILLA to CALISTA, endeavouring to console her with the hopes that the fault she had been guilty of might find excuse, as it was unpremeditated, and occasioned by the force of an involuntary passion, and acquainting her that her husband lived publickly with a mistress.

Dear madam,

THE confidence you are pleased to repose in me, in an affair of so nice and delicate a nature, is an honour which I can never too much, nor too gratefully acknowledge, yet not all the high sense I have of it, can keep me from being extremely surprized to find the effects of love so violent in a heart, I thought guarded against all the approaches of that passion in whatsoever shape they came. — To be captivated to the degree you were, and to be so, without any attacks for that purpose on the side of your conqueror, seems to me to have something supernatural in it, and is a prodigy beyond all I ever heard of, except the sequel to your amour, and that indeed is such as would gain no credit with me from any other than

than yourself.—I can easily believe *Alexis* has all the graces you paint him with, and stand less amazed at your behaviour in the first scene between you, when love, surprize, and opportunity, all joined to inspire mutual wishes, than I can at that of *Alexis* after knowing you were a wife.—He that could know desire to such excess, yet suppress that desire when most enflamed, the object present, nay, even languishing with equal wishes, and snatch himself away to obey the calls of virtue and honour:—He that could do this, must sure be more than man.—Such lovers, madam, are not the growth of every age; he stands alone, the nonpareil of the times.—I am no judge of the raptures you describe with so much energy, but am of the difficulty of self-denial; it is therefore this latter part of your lover's character which charms me, and I know not whether, unseeing, I am not in love with him myself.—It is certain, that should fortune ever throw him in my way, I should behold him with the extremest admiration, and, as I have been told, that admiration of a person of a different sex, has a danger in it, I think it will be best for me to keep at a distance, and content myself with idolizing the beauties of his mind.

You will say, perhaps, I am too gay on a subject which has proved so serious to you; but I do it to divert you from thinking too deeply either on the having indulged, or subdued a passion of so extraordinary a nature, and which, as it was involuntary, and the consequence unpremeditated, I hope, will find excuse.

AND now, dear madam, I have somewhat to acquaint you with, which before the receipt
of

of your last letter, I should not have presumed to have mentioned, but in your present situation of mind, I think cannot be displeasing to you.

You had not left *London* many days before it was known that your lord had been inspired with a most violent flame for a young girl called *Chloe*, who, though of mean birth and education, had virtue enough to resist all the fine things he said to her, nor yielded till he had not only made her a large settlement, but also provided for all her family. — At first he kept her in a private lodging, but for some time past has taken her into his house, where she now, in all respects, supplies your place, does the honours of his table, has the entire command of all the servants, and so great an ascendance over him, that he declares publickly he will make her his wife, if fortune should ever put it in his power; — a civil way, you will say, of wishing you out of the world; but that can have little effect either on your health, or peace of mind; on the contrary, the insult gives you a fair pretence of living separate from a husband who has now proved himself unworthy of you; and you may return, without any danger of being teized by your kindred with importunities for a reconciliation. — The blame of your former disagreement falls now wholly to his share, and the world will pity you for that which in secret gives you matter of rejoicing.

HASTEN then, dear madam, your departure from a place, which, in spite of all your resolution, cannot but present you with continual occasions for reflections of a nature dangerous either to your virtue or your peace of mind. Whatever contributes to preserve the too charming idea
of

of *Alexis*, must be fatal to the *one*, as the memory of those unhappy circumstances which eternally divide you, must be to the *other*. An entire forgetfulness of both, can alone restore you to that tranquility you once enjoyed, and it is therefore necessary, that new scenes, new amusements, should chase away the images of the past; — these will not be wanting among friends from whom you have so long been absent, and to whom your return will be as welcome, as it has been impatiently longed for, by, dear madam,

Your most obliged

LUCILLA.



EPISTLE IXXII.

[In answer to the foregoing.]

From CALISTA to LUCILLA, acquainting her, that she was rejoiced to hear her husband lived publicly with a mistress, and assuring her that she would now forthwith return to England, as his behaviour had given her a pretence to refuse living with him again.

Dear LUCILLA,

OW strange is the condition of my heart, how different am I from my sex, and how changed from what I was once myself: — That which would fill any other woman with rage and grief, affords me extreme satisfaction; and what to have known a month ago, would have fired me with resentment, now is the only consolation I can possibly receive in my present situation. — The knowledge of *Altamont's* perfidy and unworthiness has rendered

rendered him more agreeable than any thing else in his power could have done.—Little does he, or the world imagine, how much I prize the favour he confers on me by this public insult:—I am no longer tenacious of the privileges of a wife; no longer has the pride of beauty any influence over me; gladly I resign my rights, and yield to the charms of my rival:—Long may *Chloe* triumph; *Calista* envies not, nor will attempt any disturbance to her peace;—her conquest is my gain, and I recover my liberty by my husband's being made a slave. Fortune, which will not make me blest, at least has made me easy; and I ought not to complain, since, as I cannot be happy with the man I love, I am not doom'd to be wretched with the man I hate.

I HAVE no objection to return to my country, and those friends, from whom, alas, I have too long been absent; I shall, therefore, take your council, and make all the haste I can, from a place so fatal to my honour, and my repose.—Too true indeed it is, that I can never hope to be easy while I breathe in the same air with my still adored *Alexis*:—Whether change of place will make any change in my sentiments, I know not, but I have still remains enough of discretion to make the experiment, and do every thing in my power to lose all memory both of the pleasure and the pain of what has past. If I am not so happy to succeed, I have the comfort of knowing I have one friend into whose faithful bosom I may pour out the secret anguish of my soul. I know you will indulge the tender folly, if reason and the utmost efforts I can make should prove ineffectual to subdue it entirely.—Do not, however, imagine I shall persecute you too much
on

on this score ; for I assure you I am more the heroine than I knew I was, till just now I have given a proof of it, which, after what I have said, you would little expect from me ; it is this, happening to be at a sale of curiosities, a picture of *Alexis* was among the number ; my first emotions tempted me to buy it, and I was going to count down the sum demanded, when all at once reflection told me, that this was not the way to gain a victory over passion, and I exchanged my purchase for a *St. Agnes* set with emeralds.— This, *Lucilla*, you must own, was a great piece of self-denial, and, I am not without hopes, will be followed by others, which, in time, will restore me to that state of mind I once enjoyed.

THIS is the last letter you will receive from me ; I have already began to prepare for my journey, and if no cross accident intervenes, shall be with you in about ten or twelve days. Adieu, my dear *Lucilla*, believe me ever yours, &c.

CALISTA.



EPISTLE LXXIII.

ASTREA to PUBLICOLA, a gentleman of great wit and learning, requesting him to write in the defence of virtue and morality ; and setting forth the absolute and indispensable obligation on every one who had a capacity for it, to use their utmost endeavours for a reformation of manners.

SIR,



O adhere to the rules of virtue in times when vice is the surest title to respect and favour, is truly great in you :— Publickly to espouse the depreciated precepts of religion and morality ; — to dare the tongue

tongue of censure in a just cause, and to be above the sneers and sarcasms, which wit, ill-applied, is capable of throwing out on every thing that opposes the mode of libertinism, is christian heroism; yet pardon me when I say I cannot think this enough: Heaven, who has endued you with superior talents, demands you should exert them all in its defence against the affronts and contumelies daily offered by wicked and impious men. — Your exemplary way of living is confined only to those who have the happiness of being intimately acquainted with you: — What you *do*, is known but to few; and what you *say*, reaches the ears but of an inconsiderable number, in comparison with the millions who stand in need of the remonstrances in your power to make. — The degeneracy and depravity of the age calls loudly for a pen like yours. — Public enormities should have public reproof. — Those who are not to be won by precept or example from their errors, may, perhaps, be shamed out of them by satire; — at least, all methods in this case are to be tried, when corruption and immorality are at their zenith, and vice no longer sculks in corners, and seeks to hide its odious head, but proudly stalks with gigantic strides over all the guilty land, licensed and uncontrouled. — The crimes of Greece had an *Aristophanes*; those of Rome, a *Perseus*, a *Horace*, and a *Juvenal*; shall Britain then want her *Publicola*?

INDEED I have heard some judicious persons say, that the nation in general is not so wicked, as it is infatuated; that the blame of those general misdeeds ought to be laid upon a few, whose artifices to enslave and ruin could not succeed, without rendering the community equally guilty

guilty with themselves, and in great measure accessory to their own perdition; and I have the charity to think this observation right; but if so, fir, it doubtless the more behoves every one, who is qualified for so noble an undertaking, to use his utmost efforts for opening the eyes of the poor misguided multitude, for pointing out the snares laid for them by their pretended friends, and the headlong destruction, into which a little, a very little time, must inevitably bring them, if they persevere in following the paths they now pursue.—To remind them that it is not titles, it is not power, it is not wealth, that makes the possessor worthy of imitation, but as a learned and reverend poet has already told them,

*'Tis virtue crowns the statesman, and the man;
Sole source of public, and of private peace:
For deep beneath the monument's proud base
In black oblivion's kennel shall be trod
Their execrable names, who high in power,
And deep in guilt, most ominously shine
The meteors of the state, give vice her head,
To license leud let loose the public rein,
Quench every spark of conscience in the land,
And triumph in the profligate's applause:
Or who to the first bidder sell their souls,
Their country sell, sell all their fathers bought
With funds exhausted, and exhausted veins:
Who plunge (but not like Curtius, down the gulph,
To bring back public honour, well nigh lost)
But down the gulph of narrow-minded self,
Which gapes, and swallows all they ought to save.*

THOSE, whose sole aim is the gratification of their sensual appetites, delight to live like the beasts that perish; and believe that when they
leave

leave this world, they shall too, like them, *die all*, and be accountable for nothing they have done, are perhaps incapable of being roused by any admonitions concerning a future state, yet it is possible that some, even among those, may, on a pathetic representation, be touched with remorse for any injustice they have been guilty of to others, though insensible of what they have done to their own souls:—They may not be dead to *humanity*, though to *religion*, and thereby become less prejudicial to the world, if not to themselves.

BUT the number of such, I hope, will be found small, when set against those who act merely by *imitation*, who *mean well*, though they *do ill*:—Poor creatures, who never give themselves the pains to examine into the merit of any cause, nor the justice of any principle, but take all upon trust from their superiors.—Those certainly deserve to be set right, and it is for their sakes chiefly that I take the liberty of reminding you of what is expected from you, by all who have any remains of virtue, or public spirit in them, and most ardently desired by, sir,

Your most sincere friend,

ASTREA.

End of the FIRST VOLUME.



VI.

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